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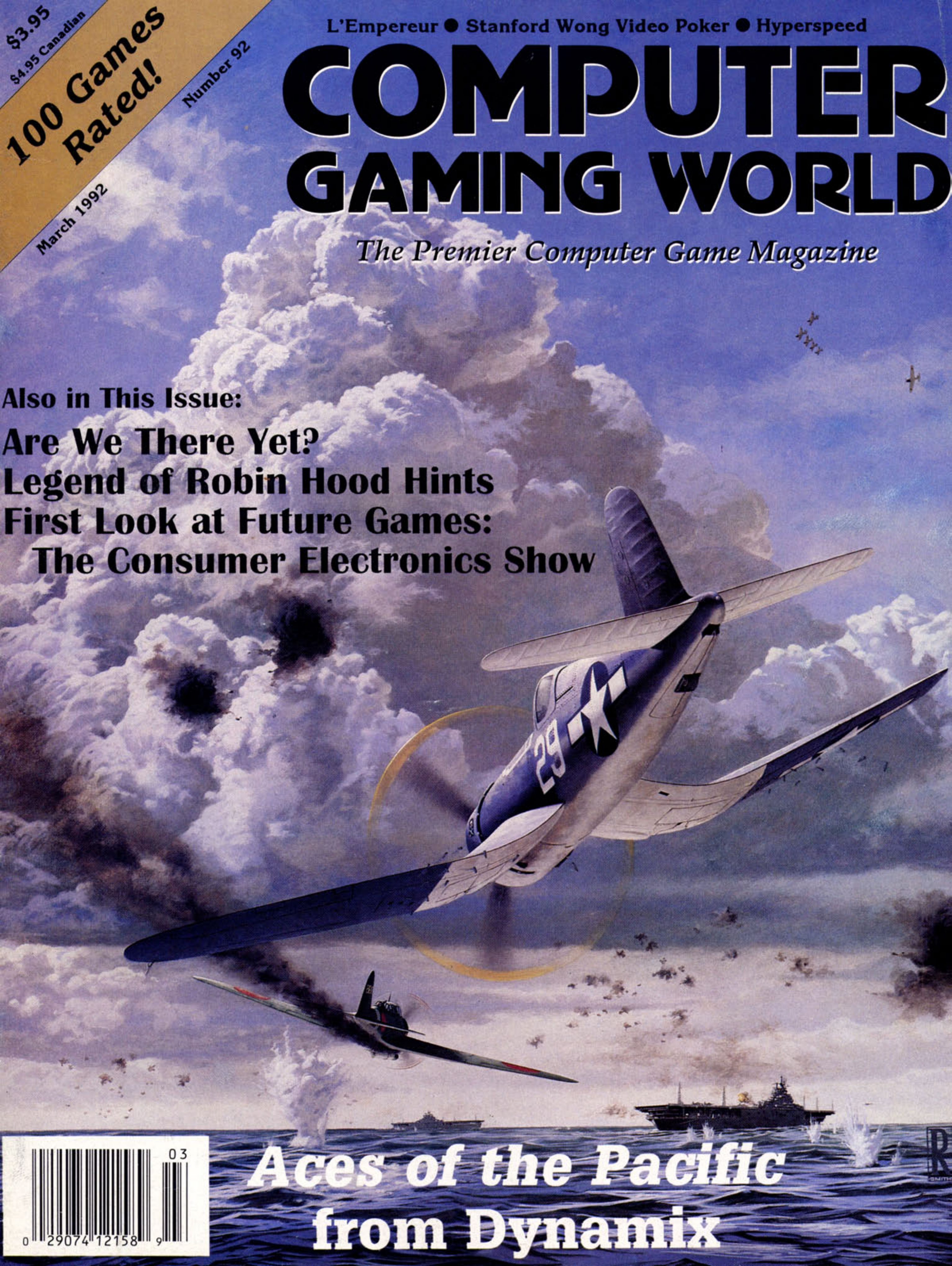
Number 92

March 1992

L'Empereur ● Stanford Wong Video Poker ● Hyperspeed

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

The Premier Computer Game Magazine



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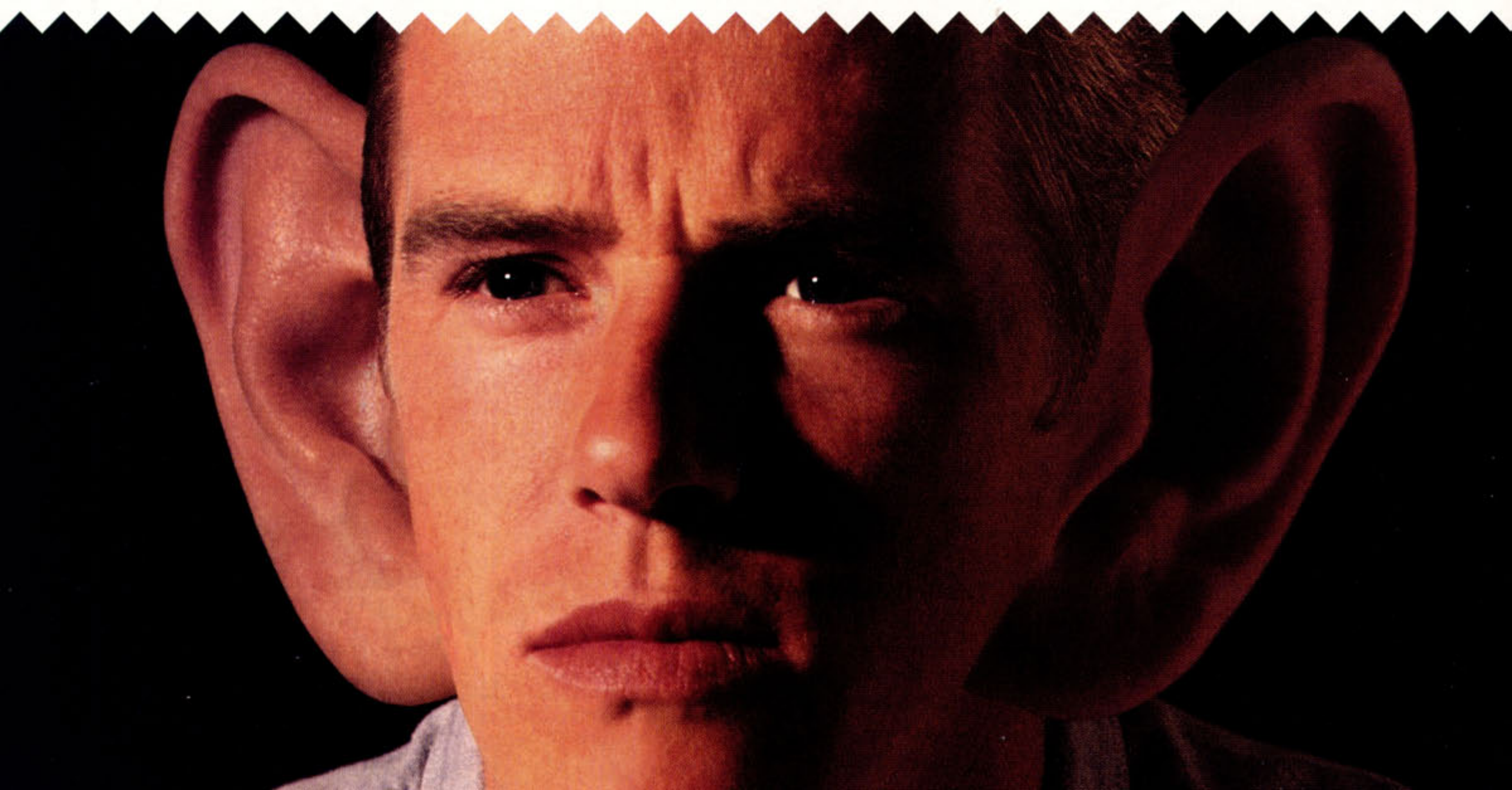
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Circle Reader Service #33



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World War II, the conquest of Europe...

Out of the ashes and turmoil of post-World War II Europe an Austrian artist rose from obscurity to command the greatest military machine ever known to man. His name was Adolph Hitler. He and his band of Ñazi cutthroats promised a starving German people revenge for the injustices of World War I and a Reich that would last for a thousand years.

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It's more than a game, *it is the definitive historical simulation of Europe during World War II.* All the elements: *military, economic, geographical, ideological* and *chronological* are included in the game. Until now, **Third Reich** has been a game for the truly dedicated boardgamer. Recent advances in electronics now make it possible to put all of the rich detail of the boardgame into your home computer.

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COMPUTER THIRD REICH system requirements: Commodore Amiga: Amiga 500-3000 (including 1000) with one meg of RAM and color monitor. Atari ST: 520, 1040, or Mega with at least 512K RAM, double side disk drive and color monitor. (Single-side version for 520 available upon request.) See what all this excitement is all about.

Computer Third Reich is available for $34.95. Please add $6.00 shipping and handling (Canadian orders $12.00; overseas $18.00). IBM PC/PS and compatibles version is coming soon.

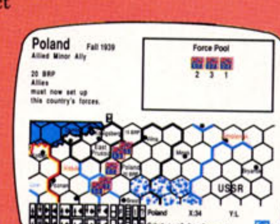
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Strategy Magazine had this to say: "The point and click interface is a pleasure to use...The map graphics themselves are excellent...At first I thought this new version would be too simple for the Third Reich player and too complex for the newcomer. Six hours play changed this viewpoint."

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Covering the World of Computer Games for Eleven Years

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Psalms 9:1-2

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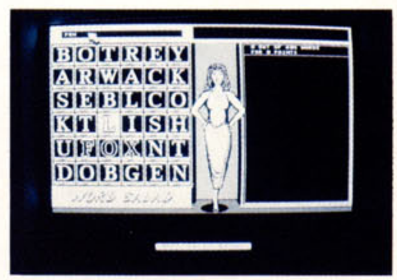
Mickey's Memory Challenge



The Rocketeer



Powermonger World War I Edition



Getaway

Cineplay Interactive
Portland, OR

FREE D.C.!: In the distant future, the robots have taken over and are studying humans in the "natural habitat" around the ruins of Washington, D.C. However, one human wants to free D.C., and the 'bots are worried. Enter our hero, Avery Zedd, a cryogenically-sealed private dick from the early 21st century, who has been thawed out to find the trouble-makers. This adventure game stresses relationships and attitudes more than puzzle-solving and item-collecting. Digitized live actors and Claymation characters, complete with stereo sound, work together in this professionally scripted story. $59.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #1.

Disney Software
Burbank, CA

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST PRINT KIT: For children ages five and up, this is another in the long line of Disney print kits. Using their standard point-and-click/keyboard interface, youngsters can use the software to make the usual greeting cards, bookmarks, invitations and more. Carefully tested for a variety of printers, the price is right at only $19.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #2.

MICKEY'S MEMORY CHALLENGE: This is a straightforward matching game for children (ages five and up) which works with *Windows 3.0* and supports the AdLib sound card. Children can play alone, against friends or against Disney characters (who have various levels of ability at playing). Objects, words and Disney characters can be matched and the optional timer might make for more of a challenge to older kids. $29.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #3.

THE ROCKETEER: As previewed in issue #88, this arcade game features classic comic-book-style panels to segue into the game's airplane races, shoot-outs, fist-fighting and, of course, rocket pack chases. $49.95, or $69.95 with the Sound Source hardware included (IBM). Circle Reader Service #4

EVERYONE KNOWS BUT INDY. AND HE'D BETTER LEARN FAST.

Plato knew about Atlantis.
In a lost dialogue he wrote about the famed city and orichalcum, the mysterious element that powered the Atlantean's amazing machinery.

The Nazis know about Atlantis.
They tracked down the lost dialogue, and realized orichalcum would yield them the ultimate weapon of the age.

Sophia knows about Atlantis.
She unearthed a mysterious necklace and beads of orichalcum during an Icelandic archeological dig with Indy. Their magical properties made her a psychic.

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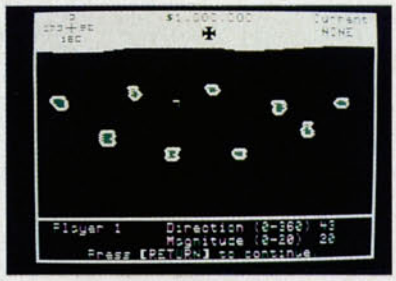
Indy and Sophia cross many paths on the way to rediscovering the lost continent.



The ancient necklace hides many mysteries from the past.

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Dynamics in Space



Vector Adventure



Castles: The Northern Campaign



Uncharted Waters



Danger Zone



The Mutanoid Math Challenge

Electronic Arts
San Mateo, CA

POWERMONGER WORLD WAR I EDITION: It is refreshing to see a fine strategy game such as *Powermonger* tackle history. There are 175 territories of Europe, *all* of which must be conquered to win. Sheep have been replaced by deer, food with rations, and the inventions are all relevant to the era. This means that there are no messenger birds, since communication is instantaneous, and rifles, airplanes and tanks are the new items of production which are available to the player's civilizations. This new variant is available for solitaire play only. $24.95 (Amiga). Circle Reader Service #5.

Epyx
Redwood City, CA

GETAWAY: Designed for the laptop variety of computers, all of the games in this entertainment 6-pack feature black-and-white quick-playing (5-10 minute) strategy games designed for monochrome LCDs. Games include *Cascade*, *Stuffin' the Briefcase*, *Word Salad* (pictured), *Solitaire* and *Dominoes*. Mouse and hard disk support are optional, but a special mode provides correction for "mouse blur," common on many laptops. There is also a system profile program used to compare laptops to each other in a variety of performance areas. There are no docs (the instructions are printed on the disk label). $39.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #6.

Higher-Order Thinking Company
1733 NE Patterson Drive
Lee's Summit, MO
(816) 534-2701

DYNAMICS IN SPACE: This educational game teaches kinematics and dynamics much like flying the spaceship in *Asteroids* did, but in a very '90s fashion. Using small retrorockets, players (students) control the acceleration, velocity and relative position of their spaceship as they dock in different space stations, each of which presents its own challenges. Scoring is based on efficient fuel use. $29.95 (Apple II family). Circle Reader Service #7.

VECTOR ADVENTURE: Another lesson in higher mathematics, *Vector Adventure* puts players in charge of various expeditions which attempt to recover a long-lost pirate treasure. Calculating the correct ship velocity (both direction and magnitude) and using kinematics, vectors and vector addition will help to avoid crashing into shoreline rocks, compensate for currents and land near the treasure. It isn't just "Yo Ho Ho," "Pass me the glass" and "Fetch me a wench" in this pirate adventure. $29.95 or $49.95 as a pair with *Dynamics in Space* (Apple II family). Circle Reader Service #8.

Interplay
Santa Ana, CA

CASTLES: THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGN: This is an expansion disk for *Castles* which pits the player against new and more cunning enemies, the Picts and Vikings. These troublesome raiders are bad news, but with the new combat features (enemy archers, wave attacks and reserves), players who master the art of warfare will be well-rewarded. A new storyline and messengers are there to challenge the king or queen, and a new element of economics has been added for players to buy and sell commodities. Raise the walls once again, and fill the breach, my friend! $29.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #9.

Koei
Burbling, CA

UNCHARTED WATERS: This is almost a role-playing version of *Pirates!*. The setting is 1502 and the player is a 16-year old swashbuckler from Lisbon whom the king's only child, his 14-year-old daughter, secretly admires. The protagonist's experienced first mate sailed with his father and is of great assistance in achieving the game's goals of attaining fame, fortune and privilege. With the standard Koei game features of menu-driven strategy and hexagon-grid combat, players will have to take copious notes in order to keep track of all that the world's ports have to offer in this fairly detailed world. Grand in scope, players will be a while learning the ins and outs of life in the early 16th century. $69.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #10.

Konami
Buffalo Grove, IL

DANGER ZONE: This new entry-level flight simulator moves those polygons in the usual variety of missions for air warfare in the desert. F-14 and F/A-18 fighters are available for Navy "Top Gun" pilots to fly with or train against their twelve classmates. Featuring a nose-cone radar display and flight room such as that in *Wing Commander*, one or two

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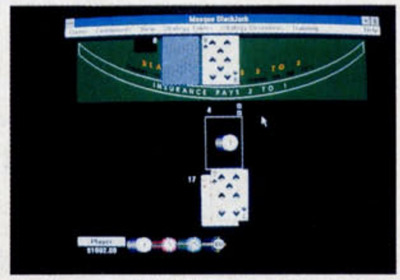
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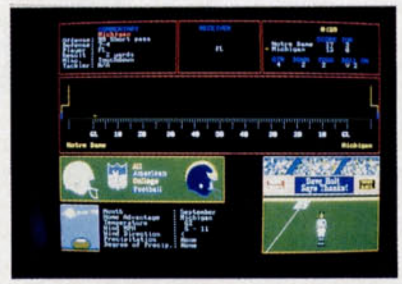
P-38 Lightning



Masque Blackjack for Windows



Sid Meier's Civilization



All-American College Football



Dark Man



Elf

players can play at the same monitor using a split screen and keyboard. Interestingly, *both* players can play on the keyboard *simultaneously*. Features include auto pilot, multiple camera views, bit-mapped explosions, mouse, joystick and sound support (AdLib, Roland and Sound Blaster). $49.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #11.

Legacy
8817 Reseda Boulevard, Suite B
Chatsworth, CA 91324
(818) 885-5773

THE MUTANOID MATH CHALLENGE: Meet the mutanoids at the Cubix Cantina. These former appliances are out for interstellar revenge and challenge youngsters to create and complete mathematic equations on a *Scrabble*-like game board by using straight addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. There are even a few bonus word problems included. The mutanoids are very cute characters, bristling with bad puns that keep play lively. The game also includes a bit of obligatory arcade action for its younger audience. $49.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #12.

Lucasfilm Games
San Rafael, CA

P-38 LIGHTNING: The first of four planned "Tour of Duty" disks for *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*, this one features the "forked-tailed devil" itself, the P-38 Lightning. This disk adds sixteen new missions and two tours of duty with the P-38H and J series aircraft. As an added extra, the 2.0 version of the original *SWOTL* is included with the package, along with the type of quality picture- and fact-filled documentation that this series of games is famous for. **Note:** "Tour of Duty" disks *cannot* be used with the campaign game in *SWOTL*. $29.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #13.

Masque Publishing
Englewood, CO

MASQUE BLACKJACK FOR WINDOWS: While the title is highly descriptive, players should be aware that four complete strategies by Julian Braun are included in the game. These encompass basic and advanced techniques for both single and multiple deck games. The usual options are there also, including: programmable house rules, odds calculations, strategy error warnings, statistical analysis of play and other variable parameters. The documentation presents a very forward look at card-counting and odds tabulations to keep players from splitting 10s and failing to double down with 11. $49.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #14.

Microprose
Hunt Valley, MD

SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION: Imagine *Railroad Tycoon* jumping the tracks, and that will indicate the scope of a game that takes players from 4000 BC to AD 2100, as they advance society through the ages. For a *single* human player against 3-7 computer opponents (who are led by the likes of Caesar, Genghis Khan and Napoleon), players found, conquer and improve their cities, build military units, discover the world (a la *Empire*) and generally try to hold things together while being the first to colonize Alpha Centauri. A grand theme, properly executed, *Civilization* looks like another winner of the *Railroad Tycoon* ilk. $69.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #15.

Micro Sports, Incorporated
Hixson, TN

ALL-AMERICAN COLLEGE FOOTBALL: The game mechanics are exactly like those in *NFL Pro League Football*. This game, naturally, provides for college play (with over 80 schools represented), while sharing all of the depth and richness of its brother game. Printouts, reports, league play, auto-updates and modem play features are all supported. Players can take on the role of coach and/or general manager in this highly detailed exercise in gridiron conflict. Includes *both*. 5.25" and 3.5" disks. $59.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #16.

Ocean of America
San Jose, CA

DARK MAN: Based on the movie, this arcade fest features six levels of kicking and punching in an effort to avenge a great evil. Our hero once had a normal life. After being attacked by sadistic criminals, his face and body burned beyond recognition, the Dark Man walks by night, searching for the woman he loves. $39.95 (Amiga). Circle Reader Service #17.

ELF: Proving that it's not the size of the man in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the man (or elf, in this case), the

DO YOU HAVE THE METTLE TO FACE ZENDICK'S COLD STEEL?







Bloodwych™

An ominous presence has enveloped the small village of Treihadwyl and draped it in a shroud of paralyzing terror. As shadows grow larger the population grows smaller. Zendick the evil overlord and his undead army are feeding on the inhabitants. Now all that stands between the carnage and the land of Trazere is the Bloodwych, a secret alliance of psychic sorcerers. Divided, they would crumble under the overlord's power. But together there is at least a glimmer of hope of defeating the scourge that's devouring the countryside.

GAME PLAY

- Recruit four of the sixteen members of The Bloodwych to assist you on your crusade; the warrior-like "Spades," diplomatic "Hearts" and stealthy "Diamonds."
- Confront deadly creatures in your quest to find the life draining crystals of storing, located in four towers of Treihadwyl castle.
- Journey through the castle in search of weapons, allies and clues that will lead you to the mystic crystals.
- Argue, barter, even lie to other characters to gain control of essential elements. Or simply wield your knives, wands, rings, staves, missiles, fire and bows and arrows to get your way.
- Commend or correct your allies to increase their initiative and ability to fight during combat.



FEATURES

- A dark fantasy role play adventure that pits your strategic thinking against an insane ruler and his mystical forces.
- Fight alone or use the two player split screen that allows you and another to fight side by side or toe to toe.
- Fully communicate with other characters and creatures with an advanced character interaction system.
- Imaginative gameplay enhanced by sophisticated spell casting and combat action.
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- Features icon-based "point-and-click" interface and game save capability.

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KONAMI®

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Circle Reader Service #54

player takes on the role of the tiny wood elf Cornelius. His girlfriend, Elisa, has been kidnapped by Necrilous the Not Very Nice. So, in the tradition of cartridge games, he must set out through eight levels of arcade action. Finding pets and herbs along the way which can be saved to purchase special items (extra lives, advice, better shots, etc.), the player will also have to challenge the psuedo-Python-esque humor rife (ripe?) within this Japanese-style platform game. $49.95 (Amiga). Circle Reader Service #18.

Origin
Austin, TX

SPECIAL OPERATIONS 1: The first of two planned expansion scenario disks for the hit game *Wing Commander II*, this one takes our dauntless hero through some new perils as he prepares to join the Special Operations Group. The player will be fighting former Terran confederates who have mutinied and turned pirate. In addition, the Kilrathi have many worlds in rebellion which are about to be ruthlessly crushed unless, of course, the player's character can save them. And that's not all — but let's not spoil *all* the surprises! Players will enjoy their new wingmen and the Crossbow bomber in this 20-mission campaign. (IBM). Circle Reader Service #19.

Paragon Software
Greensburg, PA

TWILIGHT: 2000: Paragon brings another successful GDW "person and paper" game to the computer. This time it's *Twilight: 2000*, a journey across post-WWIII Poland. Leading a band of up to 20 soldiers (while controlling only one) isn't easy in this gritty, high-tech role-playing game in which one must stop the evil Baron Czarny. Czarny, the UBG, has seized northern Poland after the collapse of all civil authority. Hardware freaks will love the trek from Krakow north, since actual state-of-the-art firepower is realistically integrated into the game. The game strives to incorporate the thrill of a simulation in combination with the characterization of role-playing games (i.e. the player is not penalized for his/her coordination with keyboard or joystick, but the game moves fast). (IBM). Circle Reader Service #20.

Psygnosis
Brookline, MA

OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS: This one is pure MOTS (More of the Same). A new disk with 100 brand new *Lemmings* puzzles is pretty much all there is (the package includes the original *Lemmings* rules manual), but that will be enough to

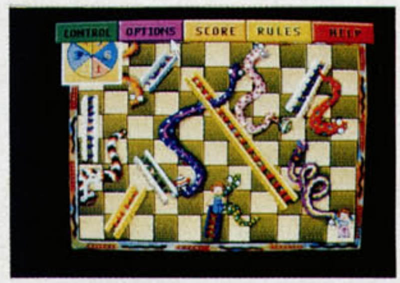


Special Operations 1


Twilight: 2000



Oh No! More Lemmings



Hoyle Official Book...Games Vol. 3



The Laffer Utilities



Conquests of the Longbow

generate who knows how many more lost hours at the computer. This is sold as a complete "stand-alone" game for $49.99 or as an add-on product requiring the original *Lemmings* disk for $34.99. (IBM). Circle Reader Service #21.

Sierra
Coarsegold, CA

HOYLE OFFICIAL BOOK OF GAMES: VOLUME 3: Six classic family games are done to the hilt in this third installment of Sierra's *Hoyle* series. Featuring Backgammon, Pachisi, Dominoes, Checkers, Snakes and Ladders plus Yacht (remember *Yatzee*?), this latest *Hoyle* game also adds multi-human player options, as well as eighteen computer opponets (including Mother Goose, Larry Laffer and a Terminator clone named "Arnoid"). A full stero soundtrack, lively, colorful graphics and "chatting" with computer opponents adds a wonderful aura to the game and both 3.5" and 5.25" disks are included. $49.95 (IBM) Circle Reader Service #22.

THE LAFFER UTILITIES: A well-planned leap backward for office productivity, this package of highly entertaining "time wasters" shows Leisure Suit Larry at his best (er, *worst*). While the innocuous title will easily get past Purchasing, the creative fax cover sheets, office betting pool manager, joke database and more will have half the office huddled around whatever computer has the unproductivity tool installed. Combine this with the ultimate office utility "Where Do You Want to Go for Lunch?" and one has an idea of the goodies in this package. With 18 total utilities, a hard disk is definitely required. $34.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #23.

CONQUESTS OF THE LONGBOW: THE LEGEND OF ROBIN HOOD: From designer Christy Marx (*Conquests of Camelot*), this account of the Robin Hood legend bears the type of attention to intricate detail that she is known for. While there is all the usual quality that Sierra usually designs into their adventure games, *The Legend of Robin Hood* is very rich with both history and characters. There are many tests of character in the game and moral judgements, com-

passion and wits tend to be what delivers the player to the best of the five possible endings. The artwork is worthy of special note for its faithful backgrounds and animated sequences that do much to add to the flavor of the game. $59.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #24.

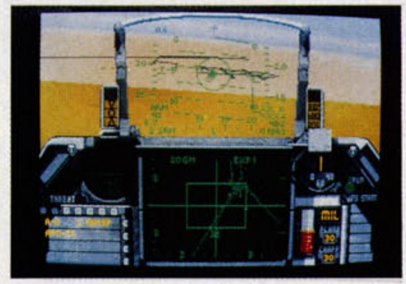
MIXED-UP FAIRY TALES: In this animated storybook, the sequel to *Mixed-up Mother Goose*, a character named Bookwyrm invites your child into the Land of Fairy Tales. Where *Mother Goose* needed nursery rhymes to be put right, the fairy tales need rectifying in this game. Young ones must retrieve segments from *Beauty and the Beast*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Cinderella* and more. While the kids are using the simple "see and do" interface, classical music from Mozart, Beethoven and that illustrious crowd plays in the background. Not only is an illustrated storybook included in the package, but so is a coloring book (*with* crayons). $49.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #25.

Spectrum HoloByte
Alameda, CA

FALCON 3.0: Easily one of the most ambitious flight sims on the market to date, the 3.0 version features three complete campaigns in Panama, Israel and Kuwait. The "Red Flag" editor is an extremely powerful mission design feature. While it still features modem and direct-connect two-player action, players will want to have a powerful computer (25MHz 386, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, 9600-baud modem, 11MB of hard drive space, etc.) in order to enjoy all the features (including the incredible video replay feature). We anticipate some quick upgrades for a few of the annoying little bugs, but the game play is still there, in spite of them. $79.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #26.

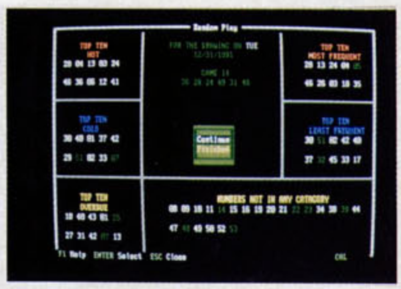
SUPER TETRIS: Those who are worried about all the extra time which will be wasted while enraptured with this game simply don't know the half of it. *At least* as addicting as the original, the "super" elements include a deeper pit which is filled with rubble which hides seven different types of buried treasure. Removing a line gives players a new "bomb" cluster which can blow up extra pieces or activate treasures. The object is now to remove the rubble in order to reveal the picture underneath. This accomplishment advances players to the next level. To make things even more interesting, play can be timed, cooperative, competitive or head-to-head. The question now becomes, "When do I sleep?" $49.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #27.

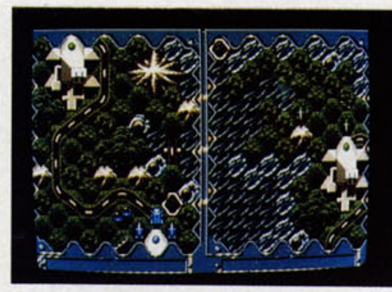

Mixed-Up Fairy Tales


Falcon 3.0


Super Tetris


Eye of the Beholder II


Lotto Leverage


Battle Isle

Strategic Simulations, Inc.
Sunnyvale, CA

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER II: Subtitled *The Legend of Dark Moon*, this game begins with the heroes from the first game as renowned adventurers. With evil on the rise to the north of the Waterdeep, a huge temple not found on any map must be investigated. With more splash graphics at the beginning and end of the game and a noticeably easier point-and-click interface for spellcasting, *Eye II* is pretty much more of the same ("MOTS"). Fortunately, the original *Eye* was worth a "look," and "more so" is *Eye II*. $59.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #28.

Technology Link, Inc.
1132 Tracy Lane
Libertyville, IL
(708) 918-9821

LOTTO LEVERAGE: Not only does this software do all of the analyzing and predicting that one would expect, but it also offers a "Play Lotto" feature. The program allows users to update their lotto drawing history on a perpetual basis and can handle either a full or abbreviated wheeling system. Full of graphs and charts, it *is* impressive to watch one's computer "pick the winners" for any six number lottery. Still, don't bet the farm on your computer. If it were really as easy as buying a piece of software, everyone would be doing it. $39.95 (IBM). Circle Reader Service #29.

Ubi Soft
Sausalito, CA

BATTLE ISLE: As previewed in issue #89 (p.84), this futuristic wargame begins at an easy level with a simple map and a few units. Like *Powermonger*, success in one campaign opens up the doors to more and larger wars. Ultimately, 32 unique levels must be conquered. For one or two players (at the same machine), the game suffers somewhat from a lack of a mouse interface but is still a rousing good strategy game. (Amiga). Circle Reader Service #30. CGW

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Rumors

● Jeff Tunnell has resigned as president of **Dynamix**, a subsidiary of **Sierra** (NASDAQ: SIER), and has formed his own design group within the aegis of the Oregon-based subsidiary. Tunnell's desire is to return to more hands-on work with individual products and to experiment in product genres that do not require the large design teams necessitated by Tunnell's last three designs. Longtime **Dynamix** executive and Tunnell compatriot, Tony Reyneke, will take over the subsidiary's presidency, and former **SPA** award-winning journalist/editor, Bob Lindstrom, will assume over-all management responsibilities with regard to development.

● **Microprose** has become a **Sega** licensee with the intent to publish *F-15 Strike Eagle, F-19 Stealth Fighter* and *Railroad Tycoon* as **Sega** *Genesis* titles. In addition, **Sega** is expected to license an as yet unannounced title from **Microprose** in order to publish it under their label.

● It is rumored that, by 1993, more than 2,000 computer pilots will be able to participate in a campaign version of an "off-the-shelf" flight simulator via a major telecommunications network.

● **PC Globe** and **Intracorp** have agreed, in principle, to the acquisition of **PC Globe** by **Intracorp**. **PC Globe**, maker of geographical software (both computer atlases and learning products), will continue to publish its products under the **PC Globe** label and **Intracorp**'s *Capstone* label will still function as the company's primary entertainment software line.

● **Dynamix** and **Sierra** are alleged to be the first third-party developers licensed for **Sega**'s CD-ROM technology. **Virgin** is expected to sign a licensing agreement on CD-ROM products with **Sega** at any time. **CGW**

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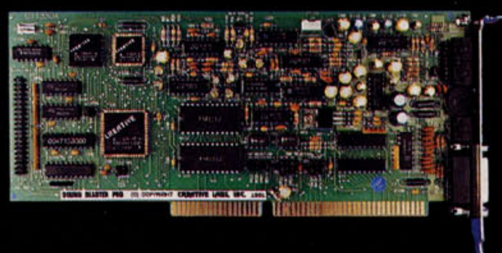


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Computer Gaming World
August 1991



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Jerry Pournelle, **BYTE** June 1991

COMPUTE August 1991

" ...Creative Labs is now turning up the volume with the Sound Blaster Pro. It's basically two Sound Blasters on a single card with additional multimedia features thrown in. It has twin FM chips capable of creating 22 individual voices, two DACs for stereo voice and sound-effects playback, a stereo microphone jack, and a built-in stereo mixer that can adjust the volume of all your Sound Blaster audio sources (stereo DAC, stereo FM, microphone, stereo line-in, CD-Audio and PC internal speaker).

The built-in mixer makes the Sound Blaster Pro fully compliant with Microsoft's Multimedia Level 1 Extensions to *Windows*. Multimedia software will be able to fade-in, fade-out and pan the various audio sources to create elaborate sound montages.

The Sound Blaster Pro includes a CD-ROM interface for either an internal or external CD-ROM player. There's also an internal connector for CD-Audio. The MIDI interface is compatible with the original Sound Blaster's MIDI interface but adds the MIDI time-stamp that's part of Microsoft's new multimedia standard.

All in all, the Sound Blaster Pro is chock-full of new features, yet it's fully compatible with its younger brother."

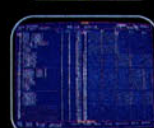
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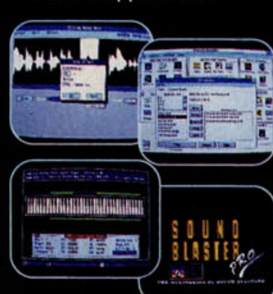
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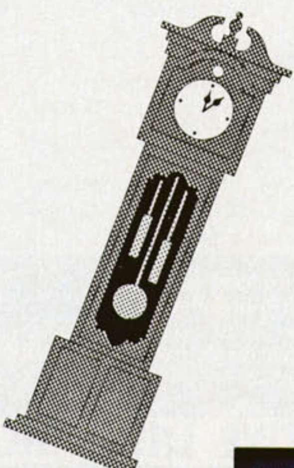
The Megabyte Zone

Topical Trends in the Future of Computer Games

Part I of CGW's Consumer Electronics Show Coverage



$E = mc^2$







Guest

The CD-ROM version of *Computer Gaming World* would open this article with the voice of Rod Serling saying:

For your consideration: we scrutinize the entertainment software industry – a gangly, gawky adolescent enterprise which often finds itself torn between the smooth pirouettes of a prima ballerina and the awkward trip over the threshold of man-year-eating technological promises and vapor-spewing scheduling nightmares. It is an industry which is entering a third dimension of object-oriented collision detection and digitized sound. Look, there's a milestone we just missed ... the Consumer Electronics Show unveils "The Megabyte Zone." (Celebrity voice impersonated.)

Submitted for Your Approval

At January's Consumer Electronics Show, held in Las Vegas, software publishers spotlighted the products that they hope will garner the approval of computer gamers through the next six to eight months. Tired scribes meet in the halls and ask, "What's new and impressive at the show?" and foot-weary wholesalers and chain store buyers try to guess the reactions of their future customers. This year, the job of the former was tougher and the task of the latter was easier. Many of the high-profile products on the show floor were products which were originally unveiled for Christmas '91 release (like **Origin**'s *Strike Commander* and *Ultima VII*; **Lucasfilm**'s *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*; **New World**'s *Planet's Edge*; **Spectrum HoloByte**'s *Crisis in the Kremlin*; **Hero Software**'s *Champions*; *Electronic Arts' Populous II*; **Microprose**'s *Darklands*; **Interplay**'s *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary* and **Mindcraft**'s *The Magic Candle II*, among others. It is difficult to write about an eagerly anticipated release that one has already indicated, in print, that one is impatiently awaiting. Conversely, it must

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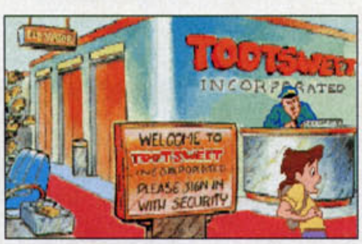
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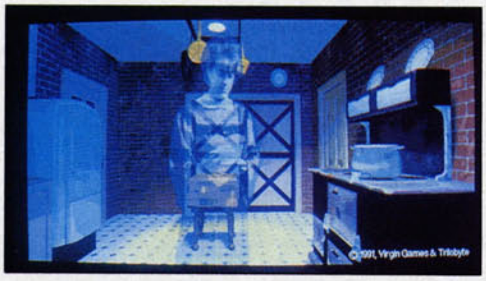
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Guest

be easy to stock titles for which customers are already clamoring.

CGW's editorial staff felt like they were caught in a time warp when they saw "Christmas '91" titles that were still under construction. In many ways, the Christmas products which ran later than expected effectively demonstrates the current state of the industry. Eighteen months ago, publishers were only spending the resources to render one or two titles in VGA (even MCGA) graphics and sound support was still selected on a *per game* basis. Currently, VGA graphics are the rule rather than the exception. Yet, the number of employees has not grown proportionately to the amount of additional work required, just in graphics and sound. The problem can only continue as new products add the new innovations in connectivity, three-dimensional object technology, digitized sound and digitized video to the previous qualitative efforts. Yet, even considering the technological *advances* only illuminates *part* of the problem.

As the workload has multiplied, more and more projects have required team efforts and project coordination. Yet the modules of code developed by individual teams have not always worked right (in fact, more often they cause strange mutations in the modules they are being connected to) and entire new permutations of work have been required in order to successfully integrate these interrelated portions of code. What this cries out for is a commitment toward software engineering in entertainment publishing such as that which is currently being used in more "mundane" forms of software development. What it also cries out for is *patience* among anxious consumers who see either marketing conspiracies or managerial incompetence as the reason for every embarrassing case of product slippage.

The products are still worth waiting for; it's just that the solutions are *not* coming easily. This portion of *CGW*'s coverage of the Winter Consumer Electronics Show will focus on technological trends and innovations. Then, this installment will close with a discussion of design innovation in the role-playing field as the first of the genre-by-genre summaries. We will present the other five summaries in Part II.

A Third Dimension of Sight (3-D Technology)

One reason for the industry-wide slippage is the fact that developers, as a whole, are working on a new technological plane in three-dimensional object programming and collision detection. Where three-dimensional illusions were the order of the day about eighteen to twenty-four months ago (with polygon-filled simulations being the major exception), modern games are being developed with three-dimensional "worlds" represented on the flat screen, "worlds" in which objects take up space such that collision detection, path finding and line of sight issues are becoming an increasingly complex web of mathematical machinations.

Origin's *Strike Commander*, *Ultima VII* and *Ultima Underworld: Stygian Abyss* were three of last year's projects which originally raised the ante in expectations for three-dimensional game worlds. Chris Roberts is not only using some of the same sophisticated terracing techniques which he used successfully in the *Wing Commander* series (and which **Dynamix**' Damon Slye has also used in *Aces of the Pacific* — see the sneak preview in this issue), but he has designed a full 3-D cockpit model so that computer pilots can look from side to side in the cockpit and get visual cues in a faster and more realistic manner than they could in previous simulations. His "scanning" concept allows "pilots" to make a quick circle of the joystick in order to scan the horizon in a full circle.

Ultima VII defines objects in a three-dimensional universe and presents the action from a top-down oblique perspective. As described in *CGW* #87's sneak preview of the game, it utilizes elaborate path-finding and combat AI which consider the impressive 3-D terrain in making their respective "decisions." The *Ultima Underworld* project offers fast-framing three-dimensional interaction and combat from a first-person perspective. Although the interface itself is closer to that used in *Ultima VI* than that used in *Ultima VII*, the technology is extremely impressive.

While these products were falling far enough behind to "miss Christmas" and cause **Origin** to proclaim a *mea culpa* and stage a mock execution ceremony at which *CGW*'s Editor in Chief Russell Sipe performed the honors on behalf of our impatient readership, other publishers were striving to "see" **Origin**'s technology and "raise" their efforts. Two such first person point-of-view games were shown to *CGW* in private showings and they indicate that the technological leap in three-dimensional role-playing games is not only here to stay, but continuing to mature in design and detail.

As public evidence of this maturation, **Virgin Games** unveiled *Guest*, a ghost story which takes place in a fully detailed three-dimensional house, designed using **Autodesk**'s 3-D studio. This game offers incredible SVGA graphics in 640x480 resolution with 256 colors and some of the smoothest, fastest scrolling yet seen on the IBM screen. Part of the advantage held by this game over previous technology is the fact that it is designed for initial multimedia release on CD-ROM.

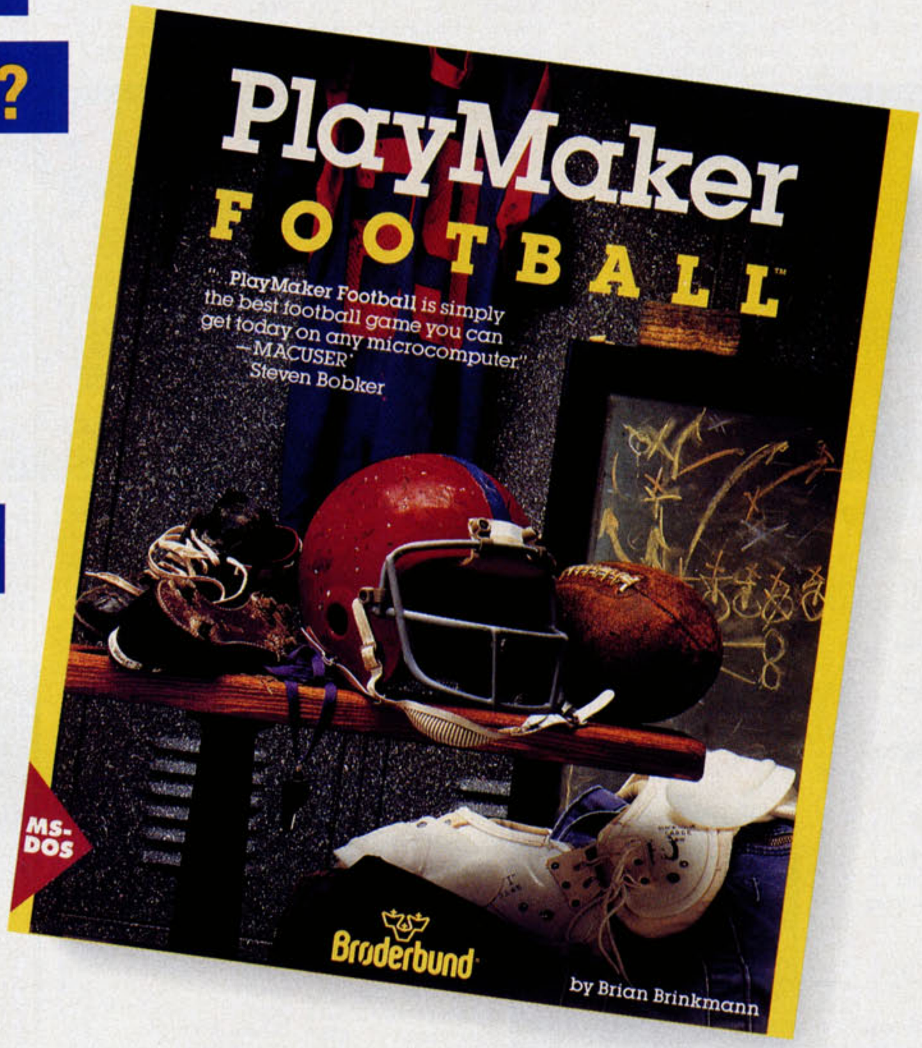
Closer to home in the floppy-disk-based world, **Paragon Software** has invested considerable capital into creating their **Paragon Studios** hardware. **Paragon**'s digital studio allows the development teams to build three-dimensional models, videotape them and use software techniques to "clean up" the digitized images, even before their artists need to do the detail work. Their *Mantis: XF5700 Experimental Space Fighter* game, anticipated in late spring, will be the first release to use the three-dimensional special effects package. It will be a *Wing Commander*-style game which requires more role-playing decision points along *with* the joystick-driven combat.

Electronic Arts accomplished something similar to its upcoming arcade game with the working title *Michael Jordan Flight*. Expected to be ready before fall '92, *Michael Jordan Flight* is an arcade game (the traditional three-on-three



Mantis: XF5700 Experimental Space Fighter

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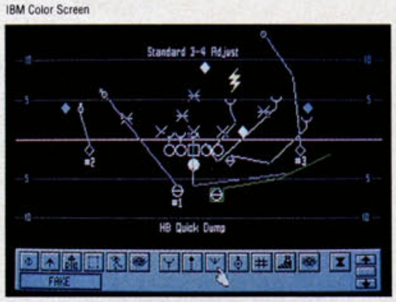
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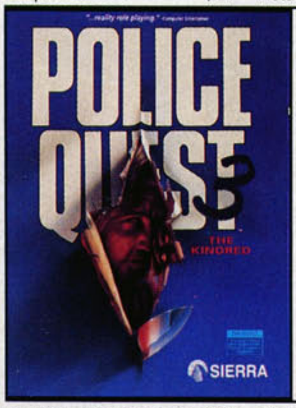
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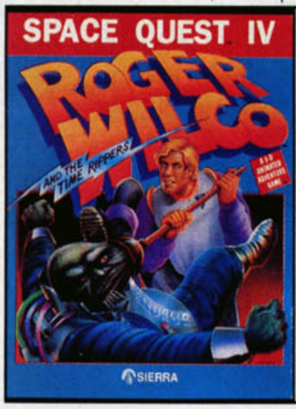


'POLICE QUEST 3' from **SIERRA** is an accurate simulation of police action in an adventure game setting. Follow a dangerous and puzzling trail of brutal cult killings and on the way make sure you 'do it by the book' to keep the criminals behind bars. Features include video-captured human actors with life-like action, **256 color** hand painted digitized graphics, and sound board support. **$34**

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'SPACE QUEST IV' from **SIERRA** is a 3D animated adventure game. Roger Wilco embarks on a trip through space and time to keep the universe safe for fair play, and bad jokes in this fourth chapter in the Space Quest series. Features include **256 color** hand painted graphics, scrolling screens, realistic sound effects, and a rock and roll soundtrack with sound board support. **$34**

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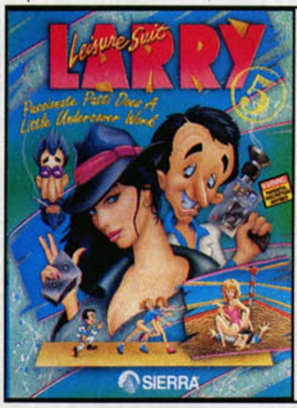
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Balance of the Planet $19
Bandit Kings of China $37
Battle Isle $32
Big Business $32
Black Gold $10
Breach 2 Enhanced $19
Breach 2 Scenario Disk $15
Castles $36
Castles Disk 1 $19
Centurion $19
Civilization $39
Command HQ $34
Crisis in the Kremlin $37
Defender of the Crown $12
Designasaurus 2 $28
Dino Wars $28
DRAGON Force $31
Dragon Lord $12
Dune $34
Empire $31
Final Conflict $34
FireTeam 2200 $29
FireTeam Const Kit $25
Fort Apache $34
Full Metal Planet $31
Genghis Khan $37
Gold of the Americas $12
Guns or Butter $12
Hidden Agenda $39
Imperium $26
Lemmings $32
Lemmings Data Disk $19
L'Empereur $37
Liberty or Death $37
Lost Admiral $34
Lost Patrol $12
Medieval Lords $37
Medieval Warriors $19
Merchant Colony $34
Millenium $27
Nobunaga 1 or 2 $37
Nuclear War $12
Objection $34
Objection Enh $89
Ogre $19
Omega $30
Operation Combat $24
Overlord $28

IBM WARGAMES

Stalingrad Campaign $39
Storm Across Europe $37
Suez 73 $29
To The Rhine $39
Typhoon of Steel $37
UMS 1 $19
UMS 2 Nations at War $34
UMS 2 Desert Storm $20
UMS 2 Planet Editor $28
V for Victory $38
Vulcan $34
War in the Falklands $26
Warship Changed Hist $26
Waterloo $12
Western Front $37
White Death $29

IBM STRATEGY

Paladin $28
Perfect General $34
Perfect General Disk 2 $23
Populous $21
Populous & Simcity $34
Populous Promise Land $14
Populous 2 $38

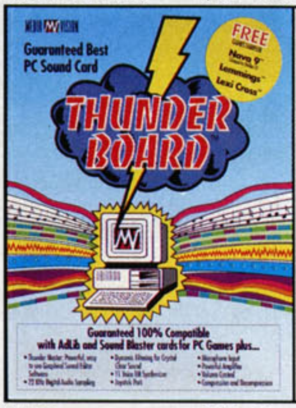


'LEISURE SUIT LARRY 5' from **SIERRA** is a 3D animated adventure game. Help Larry and Passionate Patty take on organized crime, the FBI, and the Citizens Against Nearly Everything in their spiciest computer caper yet. Features include hand painted digitized **256 color** graphics, original score by Hollywood composer Craig Safan, a no typing interface, and sound board support. **$34**

Power Monger $34
Project Moonbase $24
Project Space Station $15
Railroad Empire $34
Railroad Tycoon $34
Reach for the Stars 3 $12
Revolution 76 $29
Rider of Rohan $32
Romanc 3 Kngdm 1or2 $42
Rules of Engagement $38
Second Conflict $34
Seven Cities of Gold $12
Siege $38
Sim Ant $37
SimCity $29
SimCity for Windows $37
SImCity & Populous $34
SimCity Graphic 1 or 2 $23
SimCity Terrain Editor $15
SimEarth $41
Star Control $29
Starfleet 1 or 2 $38
Stellar Crusade $12
Strategic Forces $19
Sword of Aragon $28
Theatre of War $32
Theatre Sets $21
Visions of Aftermath $12
Warlords $29
Worlds at War $29

IBM ADVENTURE

Advnts Willie Beamish $34
All Dogs Go to Heaven $19
Altered Destiny $34
Are We There Yet $32

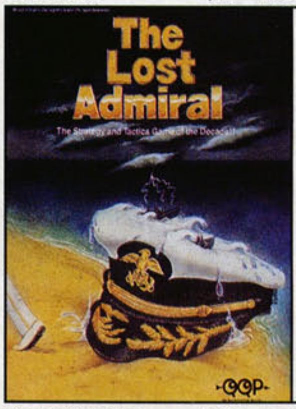


'THUNDER BOARD' from **MEDIAVISION** is a sound board that is **100% compatible** with Soundblaster and Adlib cards for PC Games. It reproduces all digitized sounds using an 8 bit Digital to Audio Converter (DAC). Features include dynamic filtering, 11 Voice FM music synthesizer, sampling rate up to 22 KHz, microphone input, joystick port, and a 2 watt power amp. **$84**

B.A.T. $19
B.A.T. 2 $32
Bart Simpsn House Wrd $32
Black Cauldron $14
Castle of Dr Brain $34
Chmbr Sci Mutnt Prstss $25
Code Name: Iceman $21
Colonel Bequest $21

IBM ADVENTURE

Colonel Bequest 2 $34
Conquests of Camelot $21
Conquests of Longbow $34
Conspiracy Deadlock $34
Countdown $37
Covert Action $29
Crime Does Not Pay $34
Crime Wave $37
Dark Heart of Uukrul $34
David Wolf:Scrt Agnt $15
Deja Vu $12
Deja Vu 2 Lost in LV $12
Die Hard $28
Don't Go Alone $12
Duck Tales $15



'LOST ADMIRAL' from **QUANTUM QUALITY PRODUCTIONS** is a turn based production naval strategy game. Features 9 scenarios, a random map scenario, 15 campaign games, flagships with special abilities, very strong artificial intelligence, in depth officers ranking system, accumulates your career history as you play, 2 player option, and sound board support. In short better than EMPIRE. **$34**

Dusk of the Gods $38
Earthrise $12
East v West:Berlin '48 $9
Eco Quest 1 $34
Felony $12
Fool's Errand $12
Free DC $34
Future Wars $28
Gamma Force $12
Geisha $32
Godfather $32
Gold Rush $15
Grail Quest $27
Harley Davidson $12
Heart of China $34
Hostage $12

IBM ADVENTURE

Hound of Shadow $19
Indy Jones L Crsd ega $22
Indy Jones L Crsd vga $28
Indy Jones Fate Atlantis $38
It Came from the Desert $19
James Bond Stealth Aff $34
Jetsons $19
King's Quest 1Enhncd $34
King's Quest 2 or 3 $28
King's Quest 4 $34
King's Quest 5 ega $34
King's Quest 5 vga $39
Lane Mastodon $12
Leather Goddesses $12
Leather Goddesses 2 $42
Leisure Suit Lrry 1 ega $16
Leisure Suit Lrry 1 vga $34
Leisure Suit Lrry 2 $34
Leisure Suit Lrry 3 $34
Leisure Suit Lrry 5 $34
License to Kill $26
Light Quest $34
Loom $19
Lords of Rising Sun $34
Lost in LA $37
Lost Treasures Infocom $59
Magnetic Scrolls Bndl $37
Manhunter NY or SF $28
Maniac Mansion $18
Martian Memorandum $37
Mean Streets $37
Mixed Up Mthr Goose $29
Mixed Up Fairy Tales $32
Moebius $28
Murder by the Dozen $15
Murder Club $28
Murders in Space $12
Neuromancer $15
Oregon Trail $28
Police Quest 1 $28
Police Quest 2 or 3 $34
Prince of Persia $25
Rise of the Dragon $34
Robin Hood $34
Rocketeer $32
Search for the King $37
Secrt Monky Islnd 1ega $28
Secrt Monky Islnd 1vga $38
Secrt Monky Islnd 2 $38
Sex Olympics $24
Sex Vixens from Space $12
Shogun $12
Sinbad $12
Snoopy $9
Sleeping Gods Lie $27
Space Quest 1 $34
Space Quest 2 $28
Space Quest 3 or 4 $34
Spellcasting 101 or 201 $34
Startrek 5 $12
Startrek 25th Aniversry $36
Street Rod 1 $19
Street Rod 2 $28
Time Quest $29
Total Eclipse $12
Train $6
Uninvited $12
Universe 1 -3 Ea $34
War in Middle Earth $15

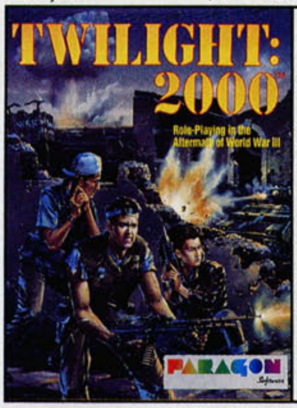
IBM MAC & AMIGA GAMES FOR LESS

IBM TRADITIONAL

3D Pool	$12
3 in 1 Players Pack	$37
Advance to Boardwalk	$15
Amarillo Slim Poker	$15
Battlechess 1 or 2	$31
Big Boggle	$15
Blackjack	$34

IBM TRADITIONTAL

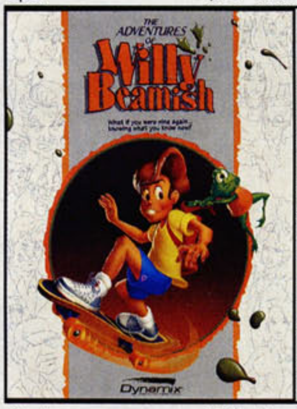
Lexicross	$25
Monopoly	$24
Penthouse Jigsaw	$24
Price is Right	$15
Prime TIme Hits 1 or 2	$24
Rack'em	$12
Risk	$24



'TWILIGHT 2000' from **MICROPROSE** is a roleplaying game set in the aftermath of **WW3**. Test your leadership skills by commanding a squad of 20. Features individual motivations, values & moral code, 50 attributes/skills, 60 careers, overhead 3D outdoor views, detailed 3D military vehicle simulators, masses of vehicles, weapons, & explosives to kill & maim with. 256 color VGA, adlib support. **$34**

Ceasar's Palace	$15
Centerfold Squares	$21
Check Mate	$36
Chessmaster 2000	$27
Chessmaster 2100	$31
Chessmaster 3000	$32
Chess Net	$34
Clue Master Detective	$15
Cribbage King/Gin King	$19
Crossword Magic	$32
Dealers Choice Poker	$34
Edwrd O Thrp Blck Jck	$29
Electric Jigsaw	$15
Family Crosswords	$28
Femmes Fatale	$28
Games People Play	$27
GO Master Deluxe	$89
GO Master 5 Deluxe	$109
GO Joseki Genius	$39
GO Junior	$19
GO Master	$34
GO Master 5	$39
GO Master 5 Toolkit	$39
GO Scribbler	$34
GO Tactical Wizard	$39
Grand Slam Bridge	$24
Hollywood Squares	$15
Hoyle's Games 1 or 2	$21
Hoyle's Games 3	$29
Ishido	$34
Jeopardy 1 or 2	$10
Jeopardy Silver Edition	$15
Jones in the Fast Lane	$24
Living Jigsaws	$9
Mental Blocks	$15

Sargon 4 or 5	$34
Scrabble	$24
Scrabble Deluxe	$34
Shanghai 2	$31
Shogi Master	$34
Solitaire Royale	$19
Sorry	$15
Spot	$24



'ADVENTURES OF WILLY BEAMISH' from **DYNAMIX** is an animated adventure game. As Willy Beamish you'll face neurotic parents, a ghostly grandfather, teachers pushed over the edge, the babysitter from hell, a pet frog on steroids, and a plot to blow up the city's sewer system. Features traditional cell animation, **256 color** hand painted scenes, and sound board support. **$34**

Stratego	$31
Strip Poker 2	$28
Strip Poker 3	$31
Strip Poker Data 1-5 Ea	$19
Super Tetris	$32
Tetris	$24
Trivial Pursuit	$26
Trump Castle	$25



'CONQUESTS OF THE LONGBOW: ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD' is an adventure game that gives a feeling for the legend. Richard is being held for ransom by the Austrians. Your goal is to raise money to pay the ransom. You are aided by your marry band and obstructed by Prince John, the Abbot & the Sheriff. Features multiple paths to multiple endings, 256 color VGA & sound support. **$34**

IBM ADVENTURE

Where Amrcas Pst CSD	$37
Where Europe CSD	$30
Where USA CSD	$30
Where World CSD	$27
Where World CSD Dlx	$49
Where Time CSD	$30
Wonderland	$34

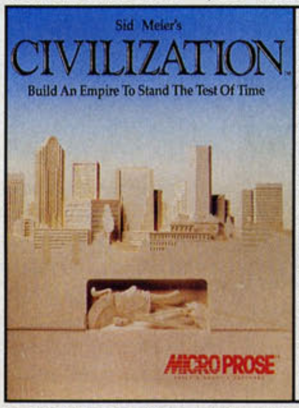
Trump Castle 2	$32
Vegas Casino 1 or 2	$10
Vegas Gambler	$28
Video Poker	$32
Wheel of Fortune 1-3 Ea	$10
Wheel of Fortune Gold	$15
Wrld Chmp Backgamn	$24
Wrld Chmp Cribbage	$24

IBM SPORTS

4D Boxing	$32
4th & Inches	$12
4th & Inches Teams	$10
1992 Winter Olympics	$32
ABC Boxing	$32
ABC Mon Night	$37
All Star Sports Pak	$34
APBA Baseball	$28
APBA Encyclopedia	$34
APBA General Manager	$31
APBA Innovator	$34
APBA Stat Master	$39
APBA Wizard	$31
APBA 1908 - 91 Ea	$21
APBA Basketball	$28
APBA Bowling	$19
APBA Football	$49
Basketball Challenge	$28
B ball Ch. 1987 - 88 Ea	$13
B ball Ch. 1989 - 90 Ea	$17
Bo Jackson Baseball	$32
Blades of Steel	$26
Championship Baseball	$9
Cycles Grand Prix	$28
Daily Double Horse	$19
Days of Thunder	$25
Fast Break	$17
Games Winter Challenge	$34
GFL Champ Football	$9
Grand Prix	$24
Grand Prix Circuit	$17
Greg Norman Shark Att	$25
Gretsky Hockey 2	$34
Gretsky League	$26
Hardball	$12
Hardball 2	$28
Hat Trick	$9
Indianapolis 500	$19
Joe Montana Football	$31
John Elway's QB	$6
King's Beach Volleyball	$15
Lakers v Celtics	$19
LH 3 in 1 Football	$30
LH Boxing	$30
LH College Basketball	$30
LH Full Count Baseball	$30
LH Hockey	$30
LH Pro Basketball	$30
LH Team Disks	$15
LH League Leaders	$15
LH Utility Disks	$15
Links Golf	$37
Links Course 1 -5 Ea	$17
Low Blow	$12
Madden Football	$32
Madden TD 89	$18
Madden TD 90	$18
Madden Football 2	$32
Magic Johnson Fst Brk	$6
Magic Johnson MVP	$18
Mario Andretti Racing	$32
Mean 18 Golf	$27
Mean 18 Course 5 & 6	$25
ML Basbll Mngr's Chllng	$24
ML World Series Disks	$17
ML TD 1982 - 1990 Ea	$17
ML All Stars	$17
ML Franchise Disks Ea	$20
ML Box Score Stats	$20

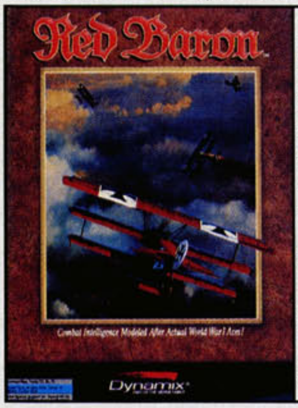
IBM SPORTS

ML GM Disk 3	$25
ML Roster Security	$20
Microleague Basketball	$28
ML Personal Pro Golf	$28
Microleague Football	$28
ML Football Deluxe	$39
ML Ftball GM/Owners	$25



'CIVILIZATION' from **MICROPROSE** "is a competitive multi-opponent strategy game with a great deal of replayability" **CGW**. You explore cities, continents, and the world in an **EMPIRE** like way. You make economic decisions prioritizing technological growth in order to advance your civilization more rapidly than the other players. The best of both **SIMCITY** & **EMPIRE**. **$39**

ML Ftball Team Disks	$17
ML Wrestling	$28
Mike Ditka Football	$34
Motocross	$9
NASCAR Challenge	$31
NFL Challenge	$60
NFL 1984 - 1987 Ea	$15
NFL 1988 - 1991 Ea	$22
NFL Preseason Disk	$22
NFL All Star Teams	$22
NFL College Alumni	$22
NFL College Teams	$19
NFL Dream Teams	$20
NFL Greatest Teams	$22
NFL Roster Editor	$20
NFL Situation Editor	$20
NFLP roleague Football	$49
Nicklaus Greatest 18	$34
Nicklaus Unlimited Golf	$37
NG Clip Art	$17
NG Course 2	$6
NG Course 1 & 2	$19
NG Course 3, 4, or 5	$15
Omni Play Basketball	$34
Over the Net Volleyball	$24
Pete Rose Baseball	$9
PGA Tour Golf	$32
PGA Tour Golf Disk 1	$17
PGA Tour Golf Ltd Edt	$45
Pro Football Analyst	$34
Pro Tennis Tour 2	$32
Reel Fish'n	$12
Road to the Final Four	$37
Serve & Volley	$12
Skate or Die	$16



'RED BARON' from **DYNAMIX** is the best WWI flight simulator. Take either side, fly 28 aircraft including Albatros D3, Fokker Triplane, DH2 Pusher, Sopwith Camel, Spad 7. Amazing AI, fly against real aces who use historically accurate tactics. Fly multiplane missions vs multiple enemies, single mission or campaign game. VCR with pan & zoom, **256 color** VGA, & sound support. **$34**

Ski or Die	$16
Speedball	$12
Speedball 2	$27
Sport of Kings	$18
Super Car Pack	$37
Tennis Cup	$32
Tie Break Tennis	$27
TKO Boxing	$6

IBM SPORTS

Tom Landry Football	$29
Tony LaRussa Basebll	$32
T LaRussa Stadiums	$15
T LaR Teams1901-68	$15
TV Sports Basketball	$12
TV Sports Football	$12
Weaver Baseball 1.5	$19
Weaver Commissioner	$16
Weaver 1988 - 1989 Ea	$16
Weaver Baseball 2.0	$32
Weaver Commisnr 2.0	$21
Weaver 2.0 1990 Teams	$16
World Class Soccer	$28
1990 Stats/Mngr Profils	$16
Weaver 2.0 Comm Edt	$59

HINT BOOKS

688 Attack Sub	$10
Advnturs Willy Beamish	$10
Altered Destiny	$10
Bard's Tale 1 - 3 Ea	$10
Buck Rogers 1 or 2	$10
Castle of Dr Brain	$10
Champions of Krynn	$10
Code Name Iceman	$10
Colonel Bequest 1 or 2	$10
Conquests of Camelot	$10
Conquests of Longbow	$10
Curse of Azure Bonds	$10
Death Knights of Krynn	$10
Dragons of Flame	$10
Drakkhen	$10

IBM AD & D

AD&D Bundle	$38
Champions of Krynn	$32
Curse of Azure Bonds	$32
Death Knights of Krynn	$32
Dragon Strike	$32
Dragons of Flame	$12
Eye of the Beholder	$32
Eye of the Beholder 2	$38
Gateway Savge Frontr	$32
Heroes of the Lance	$12
Pool of Darkness	$38
Pool of Radiance	$32
Secret of Silver Blades	$32
Shadow Sorcerer	$32
War of the Lance	$9

HINT BOOKS

Elvira 1 or 2	$10
Eye of Beholder 1	$10
Eye of Beholder 2	$12
Fountain of Dreams	$10
Free DC	$10
Gateway Savage Frntr	$10
Hard Nova	$10
Harpoon Battlebook	$19
Heart of China	$10
Hero's Quest 1 - 3 Ea	$10
Immortal	$10
Indy Jones Lst Crsade	$10
Indy Jones Fate Atlantis	$10
King's Quest 1 - 5 Ea	$10
Leisr Suit Larry 1 - 5 Ea	$10
Loom	$10
Lord of the Rings 1 or 2	$10
Magic Candle 1 or 2	$10



'ELVIRA 2: THE JAWS OF CERBERUS' from **ACCOLADE** is a horror fans' role playing game. Find and rescue Elvira from among 3 different worlds, a graveyard, a haunted house and catacombs, then fight a final battle against an entity of awesome power. Features include nearly 4000 locations, fully animated battles, 256 color VGA graphics, over 700 seperate items, and sound board support. **$39**

Manhunter NY or SF	$10
Maniac Mansion	$10
Martian Dreams	$13
Martian Memorandum	$10
Mean Streats	$10
Might & Magic 1 or 2	$10
Might & Magic 3	$16
Planet's Edge	$16
Police Quest 1 - 3 Ea	$10
Pool of Darkness	$12
Pool of Radiance	$10
Power Monger	$10
Puzzle Gallery	$10
Quest for Clues 2, 3 or 4	$21
Quest for Glory 1 - 3 Ea	$10
Railroad Tycoon	$10
Rise of the Dragon	$10
Run 5 Issue 1 - 20 Ea	$6
Savage Empire	$10
Search for the King	$10
Secret Mnky Islnd 1 or 2	$10
Secret of Silver Blades	$10
Shadow Sorcerer	$10
Simcity/Simearth	$20
Simearth	$19
Space Quest 1 - 4 Ea	$10
Starflight 1 or 2	$10
Strategy Plus 3 -11 Ea	$8
Strategy Plus 12-17	$4
Tunnels & Trolls	$10
Ultima 4 - 7 Ea	$10
Wizardry 6 Cosmic Frg	$12
Wizardry 7 Crusade	$12
Yeager's Air Combat	$19
Zak McKracken	$10



Star Control II: The Ur-Quan Masters

and one-on-one style with a three-point competition and slam dunk contest thrown in for good measure) that used actual videotape of Michael Jordan in action to create the digitized base images used in the game. The base images are then used as defined objects that can be moved about the screen. Then the design team builds collision detection so that the images can perform realistic actions vital to basketball such as setting picks, blocking out on rebounds and committing intentional fouls.

Accolade's *Star Control II: The Ur-Quan Masters* also introduces new technology. Now, three-dimensional planets rotate in space throughout the hundreds of star systems to be explored and the planetary surfaces are fractally generated.

Interplay tried a different approach with a three-dimensional product on a platform that is not *noted* for three-dimensional perspective. The software publisher has taken **Delphine Software**'s European hit *Another World*, which was developed on the Amiga, and transformed it into an **SNES** product called *Out of This World*. The action/adventure game features three-dimensional polygon-filled graphics and is expected to present the same kind of smooth-flowing action in its genre that **EA**'s *4-D Boxing* did in its genre. In addition, **Interplay**'s next release of *Battlechess* will rely on clay animation-style techniques to handle the space opera combat represented in the new game.

Legend's new *Frederick Pohl's Gateway* is also an example of the new emphasis on three-dimensional representation in computer games. Although **Legend** is known for "text" adventures which are generally enhanced by detailed graphic settings and a simplified interface, this new adventure adds an *additional* interface to the already successful **Legend** approach. To effectively capture the experience of travelling in space and risking death in the Heechee universe (created by Pohl for the *Gateway* series), the development team added a new non-arcade interface for controlling the space-faring ships. The latter, in turn, are represented by three-dimensional ships which were modeled, recreated in wire-framed "objects" and then scaled and rotated as needed for the sequences.

Microprose announced a golf product for the Amiga which uses 3-D technology to create *four* complete courses with each object fully defined. Developed in the U.K., the product offers eleven different rules sets for different styles of competition; replays from five different camera angles with very intuitive user-directed sequences and a very user-friendly interface. Entitled *Greens*, the **Microprose** product will immediately compete with *Links* on the Amiga, which **Access** just released.

Accolade's *Jack Nicklaus' Golf & Course Design: Signature Edition* not only improves the look of the popular series of products, but adds the first course design program that allows players to create their own backgrounds and three-dimensional objects in a 256-color palette. The Course Design segment of the signature product will allow players to design objects which already exist in the program (extending fairways, enlarging traps or hazards and increasing/decreasing slopes) or paint new ones, pixel-by-pixel.

Resolved to the Proposition (Graphics)

Whereas many of the products advertised as 256-color VGA are actually presented in MCGA mode (lower resolution), many of this year's upcoming products will feature higher resolution VGA and some will feature SVGA resolution. **Accolade**'s *Jack Nicklaus' Signature Golf* and *Star Control II: The Ur-Quan Masters* will move up to 256 colors in the improved resolution, as will **Legend**'s *Frederick Pohl's Gateway* (**Legend** is now distributed by **Accolade**). **Bethesda Softworks**' Chris Mate announced that *Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3* and *Terminator 2029* would be the company's entry into the high-resolution VGA market. **Electronic Arts**' *Car and Driver* will feature both 256 colors and twice the pixels of their earlier products, what Ned Lerner calls Mode X.

Disney's new line, with the resurrected name **Buena Vista Software**, is introducing *Heaven and Earth*, a "zen strategy" game from the creators of *Shanghai* and *Ishido*. *Heaven and Earth* displays beautiful 256-color graphics on both the IBM and color Macintosh that use programming tricks to cycle the palettes and essentially offer many times more than 256 colors.

Both **Virgin**'s previously mentioned *Guest* and **Three-Sixty Pacific**'s *Theatre of War* use true SVGA graphics. Gamers who purchase the latter and do not actually have SVGA boards will not have to worry, however, since the program will be downward-compatible to all VGA cards that support high resolution and, on the few obscure chip sets which do not, 320 x 200 MCGA quality resolution. In addition, the company's first CD-ROM product, *Harpoon*, will appear on U.S. machines for the first time by the summer. It will also be SVGA.

A Dimension of Familiar Sights (Digitized Film/Video)

In addition to the IBM conversion of **Broderbund**'s *Patton Strikes Back* (previewed in *CGW* #90) and **Interplay's** *Buzz Aldrin's Race into Space* (previewed in *CGW* #90), which both use digitized film images captured from historical footage, and the previously mentioned **Electronic Arts**' *Michael Jordan Flight* product, which digitized videotape and enhanced the images, several upcoming products will use digitized film footage to add to the presentation.

Three-Sixty Pacific's *Victory at Sea*, Jim Dunnigan's design for a World War II version of *Harpoon*, will use digitized film footage from actual naval battles to provide combat resolution. **Spectrum HoloByte**'s *Crisis in the Kremlin*, a political and economic strategy game based on the recently disintegrated Soviet Union, features digitized news footage to illustrate some of the events which can occur in the game. British publisher **Palace Software** places digitized film clips of various cinematic sequences in order to advance the plot of their multi-



Jack Nicklaus' Signature Golf



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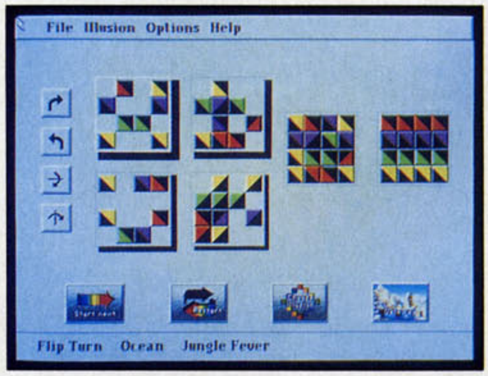
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player adventure game (see "An Added Dimension"). Also, **MicroLeague Sports**' four new products (*MicroLeague Baseball: USA Today Edition*, *MicroLeague Football: USA Today Edition*, *MicroLeague Basketball: USA Today Edition* and *MicroLeague Hockey: USA Today Edition*) will feature digitized video footage of the actual athletic competitions being simulated and some interesting connective features (see "An Added Dimension").

Finally, **Activision**'s *Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2* offers a different video impression. One scene in the product has a '50s-era three-dimensional "movie" that requires gamers to wear the familiar glasses (provided in the package).

A Dimension of Digitized Sound (Sound Technology)

Activision's *Leather Goddesses of Phobos 2* uses a hardware device contained in the package so that even gamers who do not have sound cards can experience digitized speech and music. Like **Disney**'s *Sound Source*, the hardware device connects to the personal computer via the serial port.



Heaven and Earth

Three-Sixty's *Theatre of War* allows gamers to improvise their own jazz riffs on the fly. The computer game stores musical data in wave tables and digital audio fragments which are called up according to the actual moves supplied by the players and evaluated (in terms of strategic strength) by the computer. So, players are literally improvising jazz charts as they make their moves.

Lucasfilm's iMUSE system uses an approach which is philosophically similar, but technologically dissimilar. In **Lucasfilm**'s system (patent applied for), musical fragments are stored as data, but the program will evaluate the current mood or pace of the story as the player inputs his/her moves. The program intelligently selects the instrumentation (whether a hostile baritone saxophone "blatting" nastily underneath a cranky comment or a bluesy tenor sax wooing characters in accompaniment to a tender statement), the pace (whether a bouncy reggae beat for *Monkey Island 2* or a rousing march for the heroics of an *Indiana Jones* adventure), dynamics (the volume of the music as expressed from the pianissimos of sunrises to the bombastic fortissimos of action scenes) and the composed fragment (the measures of music themselves).

Paragon Software is using their own digitized speech technology to both store and "clean up" speech. Their new fantasy game, *Spellbound*, features plenty of cinematic sequences with complete digitized voicetrack, as does their *Mantis* adventure.



SUPER SPACE INVADERS™
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Secret hidden levels for only the best to find!
In 1979, a strange phenomenon shook the World — the Invaders landed – ensuring that life would never be the same again.
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Bigger, badder, brighter, Super Space Invaders sends the game that launched a thousand games rocketing into the 21st century!
Level after level of weird and increasingly hostile invaders
Welcome to the meanest, toughest way of making a living!
Enter the World of Pitfighting — fighting for money. You'll have to face thugs like The Executioner, Heavy Metal and Chain Man Eddie.
You'll never tire of this brutally addictive game!
PIT-FIGHTER
Circle Reader Service #77
To order, see your local retailer or call 1-800-245-7744.
DOMARK
Incredibly real graphics, digitized from real fighters.
Amazing real-time sprite scaling!
A perfect conversion of Atari's #1 Arcade Hit.

Naturally, those software publishers who have used digitized speech in earlier products are still accomplishing the feat. **Access** continues to develop (and license) their *RealSound* technology, while using it in their successful *Links* line of golf games. **Origin**, who developed their vocal soundtrack for the *Ultima VI* CD-ROM game (soon to be available in Japan), is using the technology for the ultimate bad guy in *Ultima VII*. **Park Place**, developers of *ABC Monday Night Football* for **Data East**, as well as *John Madden Football* and *NHL Hockey* for **Electronic Arts** on the **Sega Genesis** and *Dvorak On Typing* for **Interplay** (all using digitized speech/sounds), have just released an affordable drafting program for the consumer, complete with a digitized tutorial which narrates the instructions for *Draft & Print*. This product, like the company's rumored football game (coming in the fall?), will be distributed by **Konami**.

An Added Dimension (Connectivity)

The capacity for players to compete with each other through direct connection (serial cable) and modem support is becoming more and more prominent. **Sierra**'s *The Sierra Network* allows players to compete against human opponents at bridge, hearts, backgammon, cribbage, chess and, now, miniature golf. The latter is particularly fun as it is not only a creative course with an intuitive interface, but it allows players to kibbitz and/or insult each other via the network's talk feature. Other projects are also under construction, including multi-player *Stellar 7* and *Red Baron*.

Other upcoming titles will support network play, as well as direct connect and modem play. **Maxis**' *RoboSport for Windows* supports network play via **Novell** networks with the **Netware** bios installed. The latest successor to the classic *Robotwar* tradition features a very intuitive interface with which two players "program" their robot forces via point-and-click menus and watch the battles unfold. In addition, **Microprose**'s *Global Conquest*, Dan Bunten's latest release for their **Microplay** line, will allow up to four players to compete in a game that involves diplomacy, as well as military



Global Conquest

strategy, in the conquest of billions of randomly generated worlds.

British publisher **Palace Software**'s *Jekyll and Hyde* moves a step further in human-oriented computer role-playing. Their Victorian-era mystery can be played solitaire (with the computer operating the other three teams of characters), but the beauty of the game occurs when humans play all four teams of three characters each. The teams include: Dr. Jekyll's team (trying to wean the doctor from the formula and marry the girl), Lanyan's team (attempting to kill Jekyll and steal the formula), the criminals (functioning as pure mercenaries in the plot line) and the police (trying to solve the murders and stop the problems). **Palace Software** is best known for their recent text adventure, *Demoniak*, but the new adventure will be menu-driven with highlighted options which will speed up the decision process for all four players. The connective technology is solid enough that *CGW* saw two Amigas and one IBM compatible connected and functioning together during a demonstration game.

Other games will feature more traditional direct connect and modem connect options. These include: **Three-Sixty**'s *Theatre of War*, **Psygnosis**' *Armourgeddon* for the IBM and **Electronic Arts**' *Car and Driver* and *Rampart*. The latter is a very attractive conversion of the coin-op action/strategy game in which one player sets cannons for the defense of a castle and the other sends wave upon wave of ships against the castle.

A Dimension of Personality (Role-Playing)

Several new design twists will enhance the role-playing experience for computer gamers in 1992. As noted in previous reports, **Microprose**'s *Darklands* will use: a map interface (featuring the entire map of Germany) to provide for strategic



Darklands

movement between towns and establish random encounters during travel; a menu-driven interface (with "watercolor" backgrounds in styles imitative of the period) which offers more options than players are usually accustomed to having; a combat system that plays in real time when the gamer wishes to advance its resolution and can be stopped at *any* time when the gamer wishes to change tactical options; a magic system built upon both alchemy and pre-Reformation Catholic hagiolatry (invocation of the saints in expectation of accomplishing miraculous results) and a skill-based character development system that circumvents the necessity of character classes.

Also, as noted in previous reports, **Hero Software**'s *Champions* (distributed by **Konami**) will feature a menu-driven character interaction to handle conversations. Rather than storing up "textlets" of conversation, gamers will choose between emotional states and emotive goals in the conversations which advance the plots. Then, the non-player characters (NPCs) respond according to "textlets" that have *specific* information that does advance the plotline. It also features great animation for the action sequences. The combat is based on each character's skills and the player's tactical decisions rather than an arcade sequence. Though the game has slipped in terms of release date, the game has a far superior graphic look than it would have had if it had been released in its original time frame.

Tsunami Software takes a different approach in terms of what the player is trying to accomplish in *Spellcraft: Aspects of Valor*. Designed by Joe Ybarra, formerly executive producer at **Electronic Arts** and president of **Infocom**, the game is set to be released by **ASCIIware**. Ybarra estimates that *Spellcraft* will take veteran gamers about 50 hours to finish, but notes that it will play differently for each type of magic-user selected by the player. Featuring 24 locations in the basic "world" for the game and seven additional worlds to explore, the game is primarily a duel between sorcerers. Almost every one of the 104 different spells (made alchemically using a very intuitive interface) either builds obstacles or conjures armies/monsters/etc. to perform the player's wizard's bidding. According to Ybarra, one playtest experience had as many as forty spells functioning simultaneously. The game features real-time battles and has up to 102 different "set battles" to be experienced by the player.

Origin's *Ultima Underworld: The Stygian Abyss*, as noted earlier, offers a first person perspective as in *Eye of the Beholder*, but it scrolls so smoothly and quickly in 360 degrees (rather than giving the impression that characters had to move step-by-step in discrete movements) that one receives an illusion of freedom seldom achieved in a flat-screen presentation. The combat is fluid and the overall impression is that this is a fantasy combat simulator (without having to resort to polygon fills) rather than a CRPG.

In addition to *Spellbound*, mentioned earlier in this article, **Paragon Software** unveiled new face technology in *MegaTraveller 3: The Unknown World*. The CRPG also features the debut of the PAL system, an artificial personality system that allows NPCs and even members of the player's party to volunteer for the tasks they are best suited to perform. **Paragon** also states that the randomly generated worlds are so diverse that no one *ever* plays the same game twice.

Konami's *Lure of the Temptress* takes another approach to expanding the genre. In this CRPG, the NPCs are continually interacting with each other independently of the player's character. Players can *influence* certain events within the game world, but not *every* event. Developed by British publisher **Mirrorsoft**, the game strives to break up many CRPG assumptions by combining elements of a traditional adventure game (with an improved interface that allows stringing several commands together) with elements of a role-playing game. **Konami** also plans to release another **Mirrorsoft** CRPG from the developers of *Bloodwych*. *Legend* is the name of this CRPG and it will feature four characters in each party, journeying through a 3-D isometric dungeon environment.

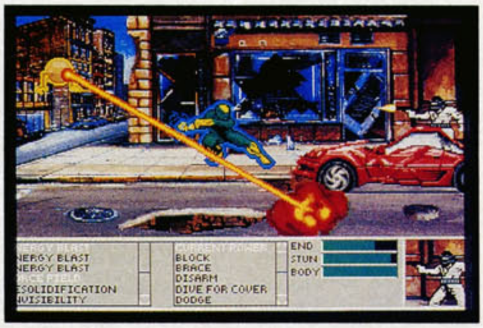
Capstone, known for its licensing prowess, has purchased the rights to Stephen King's *The Dark Half*. The game has an *Elvira*-esque perspective and a "typewriter" interface (which is logical, since the protagonist is a writer). Another interesting license is **Konami**'s *Plan 9 From Outer Space* which, from what *CGW* saw of it is: a) already better than the movie and b) ideal for a group gathering around the computer to play.

Long-term CRPG publisher **New World Computing** has added an interesting twist in *Planet's Edge*. The science fiction role-playing game allows the player to win in two very different ways: violent conquest or economic power.

Strategic Simulations, Inc. has become increasingly noted for their work in the CRPG genre. In addition to their latest *AD&D* product, *Treasures of the Savage Frontier* (a sequel to *Gateway to the Savage Frontier* featuring *romantic* interaction); *Eye of the Beholder II: Temple of Darkmoon* (full 256 VGA and bigger than its predecessor) and *Buck Rogers: Matrix Cubed* (again, bigger than its predecessor), **SSI** unveiled its *original* CRPG story. *Tales of Magic: Prophecy of the Shadow* places the player in the role of an apprentice magician whose master has been killed, and sends him/her on a quest to find a magical council that can continue his/her training. The game unveils **SSI**'s new CRPG "engine" which integrates digitized pictures and an overhead view into their continually evolving story-telling approach.

Tell Us More

Of course, role-playing games are only one strength in the marketplace and there are five other genres to cover in next month's installment. As Serling might have said: *So, for those who are trapped in a technological time (management?) warp which is not of their making and experiencing a rather annoying quark in the randomized universe we call the entertainment software industry, we urge another visit to this appointment with journalism — the Megabyte Zone.* **CGW**



Champions

When Making a "Wong" Move Is Right

Villa Crespo's Stanford Wong Video Poker

by Michael S. Lasky

TITLE:	Stanford Wong Video Poker
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$49.95
PUBLISHER:	Villa Crespo Software Highland Park, IL

Slot machines rank as the most popular games of chance in Nevada and Atlantic City. Indeed, in any place where there is legalized gambling, slots certainly account for the most acreage in a casino. Several years ago, casinos introduced a new twist on those "one-armed bandits" by entering the video age. When the video slots proved incredibly popular, video poker and blackjack machines soon followed.

Now, video poker machines rank as the number one machines in most casinos. The reason is simple: the player gets a chance to interact and determine his or her fate by selecting the cards to keep *before* the final deal determines the winning hand. The mind calculates a strategy instead of reducing the interaction to a mindless pull of the arm.

Stanford Wong Video Poker is a marvelous computer game for the video poker player who has wondered, "What if I'd played it holding another combination of cards?" *Stanford Wong Video Poker* shows all the optimum possibilities and probabilities on the computer screen. Virtually every casino variation has been considered — there are five different slot machines and two card deck designs to choose from — as well as some twists which are not actually found on current video slot machines. Not only does one have fun playing a believable simulation of the real machines *without* losing money, but one also becomes an expert video slots player for that future casino showdown.



The game's graphics are remarkably lifelike, even in CGA mode. The user-customized sound options make the games sound almost exactly like the casino machines, especially if the computer gambler is using a sound card such as the **Sound Blaster** or **Sound Master**. In fact, it is annoyingly real, with the continuous din of casino talk throughout the game. Wisely, the sound default is set for blessed silence for those who do not want their simulated gambling experience to include the discomforts as well as the pleasures of an actual casino.



Players navigate about the game using the function keys or with an optional mouse. While the mouse is preferable for select game modifications, the number keypad is more comfortable during actual play, in which the player selects which of the five cards dealt he wishes to hold and then hits the *Enter* key for the final deal.

There are four different modes from which to choose. Computer bettors can opt for: Casino mode (which simulates actual casino machine play); Tournament Two-Player Competition mode (which allows two players to compete against each other simultaneously, using the same keyboard); Tournament One-Player Practice mode (which involves playing against a pre-set clock, number of hands, and amount of money) and Strategy One-Player mode (the ultimate video poker tutorial). In the latter mode, the power of the computer is exploited for the player's ultimate monetary gain. Here is where all those "What if" questions are answered. Any hands one lost in Casino mode will be included here in order to allow the player to measure the payback for any machine's payback schedule.

Each of the five different video poker machines have corresponding variable odds that match those usually found on similar casino machines. The best odds of frequent payback is the Draw Poker (pair of jacks or better). For the more adventuresome there are the Deuces Wild, Joker Wild (kings or better), Joker Wild (two pair or better) and the Deuces-and-Joker Wild machines. As in real life, these machines are more stubborn with payouts. Default payoff schedules are displayed for each, but one can easily modify them and save those new payout schedules for later plays.

Actual play of a typical Casino mode game requires a player to select the number of coins to play (1 to 5). There is even a built-in "Maximum" coin button, which saves about six to seven keystrokes and speeds each round of the game.

If a player is unsure about which cards to play, a simple press of the "tutor" key will show the best cards to hold. The "tutor" key can be adjusted to automatically show the best cards *without* asking, as well as to warn the player that the cards he or she has selected might not be the best possible play.

Most often, the advice is about the best one can expect. Occasionally the computer algorithm goofs, however. In one game, the first five cards formed a winning straight. Four of them offered a possibility of a flush, a higher payout hand. Advice suggested throwing in the winning hand by trying for the flush — completely blind to the winning hand on the screen.

An "analysis" key offers both quick reference and detailed breakdowns of possible cards to play and the probability of their paying out in a winning hand. In fact, there are so many variables here and in each part of the game package that one could play every day of the year and it would not be the same game it was the day before.

All games and user-set variables can be saved to disk and reloaded at will. User descriptions about each variable saved can be included as well. One of the special unique twists added to the game and, unfortunately, not found in any casino is the "double-down" option. With this turned on, an entirely separate double-or-nothing bet can be made on winning hands. If a player wins a hand, a new five-card deal is made on screen. The first card is face up and the other four are down. If one selects a card higher than the one face up, the bet is doubled. If it is lower, the money from the previously won hand is forfeited. Each time a double-down bet is won, the player is entitled to double down yet again.

Villa Crespo Software has done it again: found a way to make better gamblers out of all of us, while we have fun learning just how to accomplish this seeming impossible feat. **CGW**

Electronic Arts' Family Vacation

Are We There Yet?

by Stanley Trevena

TITLE:	Are We There Yet?
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$49.95
PROTECTION:	Documentation
DESIGNER:	Carol Manley
PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts San Mateo, CA

Question: Have you ever felt like a *Fool* when going to the *Gallery* on an *Errand* for *Puzzles*?

Answer: If this question has any meaning to you, then stop reading, go to a software store near you and buy *Are We There Yet?*.

Puzzle fans often have to glean their puzzles from the various monthly magazines and the daily papers. They are experienced prospectors and will latch onto any puzzle treasure they stumble upon. A pencil is standard issue and only the brave use a pen. A few years back, *The Fool's Errand* was released and puzzle fans everywhere rejoiced. The printed puzzle had moved to the computer. Also, the computer allowed for puzzles which were not even possible on paper. Soon to follow was *The Puzzle Gallery*. It was cherished by puzzle fans everywhere, as well.



Electronic Arts has built upon the foundations of these classic programs with *Are We There Yet?* This new program contains the standard puzzle types found in the earlier programs, but has been fleshed out to offer a full musical soundtrack, attractive animation and a storyline right off the big screen.

The Mallard family is your basic all-American dysfunctional family. Drake, the father, loves to drive his car. Where he drives is of little concern as long as he drives. Mom is so stereotyped that the rest of the family has forgotten her name. So, as one can easily imagine, Mom has an identity crisis. Tiffany, the daughter, blames her parents for everything that intrudes on her life. Blip, the son, has a permanent link with his hand-held video game and nothing else in the world seems to matter. As long as Blip is playing he is happy — like father, like son.

The Mallards can't seem to do anything right. They entered the Popped Clusters cereal company's Vacation Sweepstakes with visions of great prizes and wealth beyond their wildest dreams. The Mallards didn't win first prize, a tour of America's family fun capitals and assorted other items. Nor did they win second prize, a library of the world's greatest travel brochures and a Knobby the Wonder Slug compass. They even lost out on the restraining order issued to the third prize winner to never pester the cereal company again. Instead, the Mallards came in fourth and won a coupon book for America's most forsaken tourist traps, a year's supply of Sweet 'N' Gritty, and a police escort to the county line.

As a result, the Mallards must visit each state in the nation and solve two puzzles at each of their stops in order to be allowed to come home. They will need the help of the player, since their combined brain power might power a dim lightbulb on a moonless night. Along the way they will collect souvenirs from each of their stops that will become clues in solving the final puzzle.

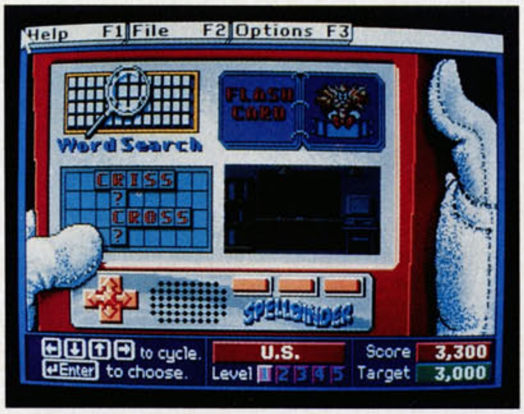
The user interface is identical to *The Fool's Errand* and *Puzzle Gallery*. Pull-down menus are utilized for access to the puzzles. Players must complete sets of puzzles before additional ones are made available. The puzzles start out relatively easy and quickly escalate to very difficult. As mentioned above, there are two puzzles per state, making for a total of 100 puzzles. Most of these puzzles are multi-stage puzzles, extending the challenge even further. There are also five bonus puzzles that are not required to complete the game but bring back memories of the games played on long trips in the back seat of the family wagon. Then, after all the puzzles have been solved and the souvenirs are assembled, the player will tackle the "Mother of all puzzles"..

Along the way the player will encounter a wide variety of puzzles. Alphabet Soup puzzles present the player with 26 lines of letters. By typing a letter into the box in the middle of a line, a five-letter (or larger) word can be formed. Each letter can only be used once. There are standard crossword puzzles in which the player must fill in the blanks from clues. There is also a variation on this theme with the Block Crossword Puzzle. Interlocking pieces must be placed in an enclosed area to form sentences, and the pieces cannot overlap. Concatenation puzzles have a series of buttons that when pressed add or delete letters and spaces from the screen. Pressing these buttons in the correct sequence will reveal the hidden words.

Crosstic puzzles have a series of blank boxes on the screen and clues are given to the player for single words. As the player types the answers to the single-word puzzles, the letters in the series of boxes are filled in and, if all goes well, the player will expose the hidden phrase. Cryptograms are of the standard "unscramble the letters to solve the puzzle" variety. Find the Sentence requires the player to eliminate words in a matrix in response to a series of directions (i.e., click on all words that are birds). A sentence will remain if all directions were followed to the letter.

Flat Tire puzzles are made up of a series of letter circles. There is an outer ring and an inner ring that can be rotated in each circle. In the middle of the tire the player types two letters and then rotates the outside ring to form words. Follow the Path puzzles are maze-like and require the player to get from point A to point B while avoiding the traps. There are also several variations on the Hangman theme. Two types of Jigsaws are included, the first being the standard jigsaw made up of square pieces. The second type is animated jigsaw

which changes as the player assembles the pieces. Word Jumbles are familiar to most puzzle players, as are Mazes. Magic Square puzzles require the player to rearrange letters in a matrix so that words can be read both across and down.



Quotefall puzzles have a jumble of letters on the top of the screen and a blanked out phrase below. The player must type in the letters to fill in the blanks. The letters fall from the top and can only be used once each in the puzzle. Rebus puzzles are similar to the picture puzzles made famous on the TV game show *Concentration*. Simon puzzles require the player to repeat actions performed by the computer. Word searches are of the standard horizontal, vertical and diagonal variety. In later puzzles, the angle word is introduced. This is a long word that will take a 90-degree turn somewhere in the word. X-Ors use a series of buttons to turn on and off sections of the screen. By pressing the right buttons, a word will be exposed.

A clue book is included with the program. If the player has a weakness for overusing answer books, this reviewer strongly suggests that the clue book be sent to a friend or relative's house or locked up in a safe. The book gives exact answers and should only be consulted as a last resort. Keeping it within reach of the computer can only diminish the overall enjoyment of the game. However, there are several errors in the cluebook that the player should make note of:

pg. 19: Maine Holy Mackerel Tournament. *Piranha* should be the last word in the fourth group.

pg. 21: Minnesota Trout-o-Rama. The across answer to Power or Influence should be *Clout* and not *Doubt*.

pg. 25: Nebraska Toadstool Park. *Come far* should be *Come so far* and the last word is *Sun* not *Run*.

pg. 29: New Jersey Wild West Museum. Add *Jammers* to the vertical words list and *Beamer* to the Diagonal words list.

pg. 35: Ohio Seaworld: Combine the words *Pearl* and *Nautilus* to make a single word *PEARLYNAUTILUS*.

Are We There, Yet? is a fun romp across the familiar U.S.A. with stops in all the strangest places not likely to appear on most road maps. These are all actual places and, as a reward sequence, there is both a humorous dialog and a brief description of the attraction provided upon the successful completion of each puzzle.

This reviewer actually saw the Busch Stadium National Bowling Hall of Fame and Museum on a recent trip to St. Louis and can, at least, vouch for *its* existence. *[Ed. Note: We hope he was only driving past.]* There are also humorous animated film clips of the Mallard family along the way that always end in a revealing snapshot for the family album. Between the gingerbread that surrounds the puzzles and the puzzles themselves, hours tend to slip away as players keep telling themselves, "Just one more and then I am going to stop for the day." *Are We There, Yet?* is a puzzle bonanza that should be sampled by all conundrum connoisseurs. **CGW**

Scorpion's View

Accolade's Elvira II: Scorpia Critiques the "E"motion Pictures

as told by Scorpia

Scorpia is an experienced and respected adventure game expert. CGW is pleased to be able to provide this forum for her distinctive and often controversial perspective.

Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus requires gamers to perform another rescue mission. Last time, gamers had to save Elvira from an evil relative of hers. This time, they have to save the big E and what's left of her movie venture, Black Widow Productions, from the hands (jaws?) of a three-headed demon called Cerberus.



So there are two goals here: freeing Elvira, and banishing Cerberus from this plane of existence. Unfortunately, I won't be able to tell you much about the end portion (getting rid of the demon), since I was unable to finish the game. The reasons for this will become clear a little later.

Elvira II begins just outside the gates of the movie studio. Here, you choose which of four characters you want to play in the game: stuntman, computer programmer, private eye or knife-thrower. The only difference among them is the starting values of their attributes; otherwise they all have pretty much the same abilities.

Overall, the private eye is the best-balanced of the four. While he isn't outstanding in anything, neither is he deficient in anything, and his beginning attributes are all above average. This is important, as you must use both fighting skills and magic to get through the game.

Character stats do increase with level gains, but they are not big increases and you will be able to get no higher than level ten. Magic points (necessary for spellcasting) are equal to twice your intelligence, and these renew slowly after spell use. Obviously, the better your intelligence rating, the more points you have, and the more spells you can cast before running out of "juice."

Strength, Weapon Skill and Weapon Accuracy are important for hand-to-hand combat. This is how you will dispose of most of the monsters you come across, so you can't neglect them. Life will be a little easier (not to mention longer) if your ratings in these areas are good ones.

Unlike the earlier game, hit points are no longer generic. While you have an overall hit point rating, this is not as important as the values for individual body parts: legs, arms, torso and head. Thus, you might have 30 hit points total, but each area itself has only five points.

An arm or leg brought down to zero becomes useless; it might even be cut/bitten off (in which case, you have a big problem). A head brought to zero is an even bigger problem: you're dead. It's important to keep an eye on the upper left corner of the screen, which displays the hit points for each body area, and heal injured parts as quickly as possible.

Healing can only be done with spells; hit points do not renew over time the way magic points do. There are several healing spells in the game, of varying potency and power cost. You begin only with the minor Healing Hands, which restores just a small number of hit points per casting, but it's much better than nothing. Having a good supply of this spell on hand could save your life.

Magic in this game is a bit different from the previous one. Spells still have to be mixed, but now you do it yourself. Instead of hunting for herbs, you look for a variety of objects that are placed on a page in your spell book and mixed to create the incantations you need.

Some spells are virtually free: they require no ingredients at all. Healing Hands and Ice Dart (a minor attack spell) are two of them. You can mix up as many as you want at almost any time. Other spells have ingredients that are not easy to find or come by, and it may be a long time in the game before you're able to whip up a few of them.

Fortunately, if you place an incorrect ingredient on the spell page, nothing happens to it. The game simply informs you that the ingredients are incorrect, and they stay in your inventory. So, you can experiment with different objects as components without fear of losing anything... at least, up to a point. That point will be discussed a little further on.

Once a spell has been mixed up (you may get more than one spell per mixing, depending on the ingredients and your intelligence at the time of mixing), an icon representing that spell appears in your inventory. You can click on this icon almost any time to recall what spell it is, and how many you have left.

To cast a spell, you click on the spellcasting icon on the right side of the screen. Your regular inventory is replaced with a display of all spells available, and you simply click on the one you want to cast. This special display can be called up and left on the screen, which is handy for those moments when you want your spells ready for an important battle.

Melee combat is a little like before, but not completely. When fighting, the cursor

changes to a small sword icon (regardless of what weapon you're using), and you click this icon on your opponent. The damage you do when you hit is shown by a small light-up bar graph on the right side of the screen. A similar graph on the left shows how much damage the monster is doing to you.

Where you place that icon on a critter is important, as it indicates the place you're trying to hit. Different monsters have different weak points. Skeletons, for instance, are especially vulnerable in the legs. One good shot (that hits) to a skeleton's leg will put it down and out.

You can also try to retreat from combat if you're taking a beating. Unless there is a wall right behind, or the circumstances are special, you can usually back away from a fight, turn around and move as quickly as possible to some safer location where you can heal up and restore magic points (provided, of course, that the monster on your tail doesn't get to you first).

Copy protection in the game is worked through a code wheel, and is needed in several places, so don't lose it. You have to punch in a number from the wheel to enter the studio proper and again to get into any of the three sound stages in the studio itself. Without the wheel, you won't get very far.

The beginning is the most effective part of the game. There are few things more eerie, more nerve-wracking, than walking through a deserted building at night. Especially when you already know that there are all manner of monsters lurking about. You hold your breath every time a door opens, wondering if something is going to leap out. Every so often, you turn around to make sure nothing is following you. Each room, each passageway, is filled with an aura of unseen menace.

Once you start investigating the sound stages, however, much of that atmosphere dissipates into pedestrian hack-and-slash. The bug caverns behind door #1 and the catacombs under the chapel behind door #3 provide an almost endless parade of critters to kill, and little else. In these areas, it's mainly a matter of slogging and hacking through the tunnels until you reach your goal, and then slogging and hacking your way back again.

Behind door #2 is the Haunted House set, which is the puzzle part of the game. There are few (but nasty) monsters to kill; much of what needs to be done here is more adventure-related than anything else. Once you have investigated the offices and dressing rooms, start with sound stage #2 first.

There is an extremely important reason for this. Unless you know exactly what you're doing, you can easily shaft yourself and be unable to complete the game. It is vital that you get past the ghost blocking the doorway to the library beyond and read all the books, as soon as you can.

Why? Simple: some items that can be used as spell components *also* have special uses in the game. Naturally, if you use up those special items for spells, you are out of luck. There is no warning of this when you use these objects to mix spells. The only way to know is to get into that library and read the books.

Even that is not a guarantee you won't go wrong. Consider what happened to me. I found a secret passage that led to an evil altar room. On the altar was a chalice of blood and some black candles.



Up above, a group of vampires were sleeping in the belfry. Not wanting to overstay my welcome, I nipped across the room, grabbed the chalice, and beat a hasty retreat. This was before I had gotten to the library.

After reading the books, I found out that I'd need the black candles later (for banishing the demon). No problem; I'd pick them up when the time came. Unfortunately, when the time did come, I was stuck. No matter what I did or tried, a vampire always woke up and killed me when I approached the altar for the candles. Even using the Telekinesis spell did not work to bring the candles to me.

Eventually, I discovered that what had kept me protected the first time was the silver cross that is part of your beginning inventory. However, I had used that cross a long time ago for a spell. There is another crucifix in the chapel with the priest's body, but this has no power to keep off the vampires.

It probably wouldn't have mattered even if I had been able to get the candles; after all, you need matches to light them. Matches are a "combustible substance" and make great fireballs. I whipped up a batch early on, long before I knew about the candles needed for the ritual. That took care of the matches and I couldn't find any others anywhere.

So there I was at the end game, with nowhere to go. Elvira was free, the Indian shaman in the basement had gotten all his magic items back (you spend the major portion of the game retrieving these objects) and the priest was resurrected, but *I* was stopped.

One reason I found myself in this plight was a problem with the save game function. You can have a lot of save game positions. When you invoke this utility, you get something like a page in a book, where you can either type in a new save name, or overwrite an earlier one.

When a page fills up with saves, you can start on a new one. However, I could not get beyond two pages of saves. The program wrote out what would have been the first save for page three (it was there on disk), but was never able to find it and restore it. So, I had only those first two pages and eventually, had to overwrite earlier positions.

Thus my only option would be to restore to a very early save I still had, and replay about 90% of the game. Even had there been time for this, I am not *that* dedicated; one expedition through the bug caves and catacombs was enough.

This is an extremely typical European design which shows a complete lack of even the most elementary understanding of the puzzle-solver's mindset. European gamers do not seem to mind returning through level upon level of hack-and-slash in order to get slightly further in the game. U.S. gamers, who tend to be heavier on puzzle-solving, are more likely to move on to a new game. The design simply runs against the grain of the domestic gamer. There are too many places where a player can go wrong and use up a vital item unknowingly. Everything appears to be set up around the player getting into the library and reading the books before doing anything else.

That is an unwarranted assumption on the part of the designers, especially as the game is not obviously linear in design. You can go almost anywhere at any time. If a puzzle stumps you, you can do something else, never realizing until too late that you've painted yourself into a corner.

At the very least, items needed for special purposes should not have been accepted as spell ingredients, except in those cases where the item is necessary to a special spell (as the inscribed prayer-book is needed for Resurrection), and then, only for that particular spell.

It wouldn't have been hard to display a message such as "You may need that later on for something else" when the player tried to mix a spell with a vital object. Instead, the program merrily accepts whatever fits the component description, with no warning whatsoever.

You can also find yourself up a creek by doing the wrong thing in the mad scientist's lab below the kitchen. One room has a typical Dr. Frankenstein setup, complete with monster. If you should happen to click near its head, while carrying the wire cutters in your inventory, you automatically sever those wires. Note that you are not asked *if* you want to do this. It just happens. In fact, if you don't look very carefully at the close-up of the monster's head, you may not realize this has been done. Then, later on, when you have to revive the monster briefly, you may wonder why it's not coming to life when it should be.

When you finally do figure it out, the only course is, naturally, to restore back to some earlier save, *before* you cut the wires, and replay however much is necessary to get back to where you were before. This is not fun by any standard.

There are also some minor irritations I'm not going to bother mentioning, except for the music. You can't turn it off. There is no command in the game for "no music/sound," nor is there such an option when you install the game. You have a choice of soundboards or PC speaker, and that's it. If you play into the early hours, all you can do is fiddle with the volume control on your sound card (I pulled the plug on mine; it was easier). I don't know what people with only the speaker could do about it.

Overall, *Elvira II* was a grave disappointment to this columnist and likely to provide more frustration than fun to any but the most dedicated player. **CGW**

On Not Getting "Stung" by the Save Problem

In *Elvira II*, the save game function will allow the player to save 24 games on a page. There are two pages available for saving one's games, for a total of 48 save game "slots," from which previously saved games may be restored. After one has filled the 48 "slots," players are presented with a blank page for *both* saving and restoring. This means that they will need to either rename the 48 previous save files (using the DOS "RENAME" command) or move the files to another directory or floppy in order to restore any further saves.

All of the save games have the DOS suffix of .SAV and are located in the Elvira directory. So, it is a simple matter to use the "RENAME" command to change the suffixes to anything other than .SAV (one's initials?). If one prefers simply to move the save files to floppies, 23 save positions will fit onto a high density (1.2 meg) 5.25" floppy disk. If one performs a COPY *.SAV A:\ or an XCOPY *.SAV A:\, DOS will copy 23 files onto the disk.


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Over There

POWERmonger to the POPULous

by Paul Rigby

While many United States consumers may not recognize the name of award-winning British developer **Bullfrog**, the fact remains that they are the creative minds behind both *Populous* and *Powermonger*. In 1992, they will unleash a number of new titles to delight the *Populous* fans out there. Currently out on the Amiga (with IBM available soon) is *Populous 2* (*P2*). So, what's changed? Well, not a lot, really. *P2* is more of the same, only on a larger and grander scale. Taking the role of a Greek god this time, *P2* once again asks the player to make one's people the most dominant race on the map. The player races through the worlds attempting to outwit the opposing deity.

Comparisons between *P1* and *P2*? Well, *P2* does away with the "book"-look presentation to offer a floating islands appearance. Graphics are faster and more detailed. The scenario, based upon Ancient Greece, is more coherent. There are more worlds (1,000), more varied enemy gods and a lot more special effects.

However, if *Populous 2*'s one thousand worlds does not impress gamers, **Bullfrog** has yet another answer. Jaded gamers can construct a few more worlds with the *Populous: World Editor*. With this program, one can change the people, places and terrain of the original game. This means that the user could produce his own architecture and "theme." Other changes include altering the birth/death rates of the people, their intelligence and amount of Manna provided by households. It is currently available on the Amiga with other formats to follow.



Powermonger: World War I



Team Yankee 2: Pacific Islands

To complete this "divine" trio is **Bullfrog**'s modern adaptation of their *Powermonger* game. Called *Powermonger: World War I*, the player is shown a map of Western Europe. There are 175 territories to conquer and one must bring two-thirds of these areas under control to win the game. The play is typically *Powermonger*-esque with no real surprises. However, there are obvious WWI slants, including inventions like tanks, rifles and biplanes. (Yes, aircraft play a part in this game.) Food is now called "rations," while communication is instantaneous via the powers of radio and telegraph. Note: Currently available on the Amiga with other formats to follow, players must have a copy of the original *Powermonger* in order to play the World War I edition.

On one of the UK's national television channels, there is an interactive children's television program known as *Knightmare* (described in *CGW* #90, p. 68). The program utilizes advanced computer gadgetry (I believe there are even a few turbocharged Amigas in there, somewhere) to generate computer images that provide suitable puzzles for the kids to solve in this adventurous role-playing game. Now, the **Mindscape** (UK) team who produced the massive first-person perspective CRPG *Captive*, have purchased the *Knightmare* license in order to bring the TV studio-based CRPG onto a personal computer. Naturally, **Mindscape** plans to make the games a little deeper than the ones on broadcast television, but the game is expected to feature plenty of puzzles, logic problems and riddles for the player to solve in the home version. The player must complete four scenarios before (dramatic chord) Lord Fear can be vanquished!

Utilizing the now-classic mix of weaponry and magic, one must wade through a wide range of monsters. Four characters can be created, objects can be manipulated and skills can be increased via experience. *Knightmare* has just been released for the Amiga and will soon be available for the Atari ST. The IBM version has yet to be announced. However, since *Captive* for the IBM is expected within the next couple of months, one would suspect that *Knightmare* cannot be far behind.

Team Yankee 2: The Pacific Islands (*TY2*), from the UK software house **Empire**, is due on all formats about the time this column goes to press. Utilizing the same 3-D real-time tank simulation aspects of the original *Team Yankee*, but offering bit-mapped graphic enhance-



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ments, *TY2* is set on a series of Pacific islands overrun by Russian forces. The player must attempt to regain all of the islands in a series of tank battles (at least 45 such battles). One can decide where to land on each island and, in fact, in what order the islands are to be attacked. Failure to hit crucial communication and satellite centers will result in the enemy gaining extra intelligence, thus providing stiffer opposition. The player is also responsible for the purchase and renewal of weapons and men (even second-hand tanks can be used in an emergency). As "backers" supply important funds for the action one's strategy must be accomplished to "impress" as well as be effective strategically.

Impressions has, yet again, gained its semi-regular spot in this column with the release of *Great Napoleonic Battles* — now shipping for Amiga and Atari ST (£29.99) with, as seems to be par for the course, the IBM version to follow soon. Three battles are provided along with a Map Editor, Man Editor and War Editor. Included battles (Waterloo, Quatre Bras/Ligny and Marengo) can be modified and new scenarios can be generated with the included utilities. Using a hex-based, turn-based system, *Great Napoleonic Battles* includes a two-player option.

From **Core Design**, the UK software house that delivered *Thunderhawk*, comes *Heimdall*, an action/RPG hybrid game with an isometric viewpoint. Basing the plotline upon the previously untapped Norse legends, the player is the Norse god Heimdall, out to find the lost weapons hidden by godly mischief maker Loki. The evil forces are out to storm the walls of Asgard (the home of the gods) and the weapons provide the only real defense (e.g., sword of Odin, etc.). The game is a fair size. The Amiga version arrives on five disks, disk one being a rather impressive graphic introduction. Before one can set off, though, Heimdall has to take part in three subgames to select his attributes; a team can be chosen after this section to accompany the hero on his quest. The quest itself, by the way, takes part within fifteen islands containing a large amount of rooms. *Heimdall* is no *Ultima* — it is far too lightweight and action-oriented — but those who want a CRPG that offers equal weight to reflexes and synapses may be attracted to it.

Incidentally, anyone who would like to contact *CGW*'s foreign correspondent can do so on **CompuServe** (75300,1503) or by mail to 20 Malvern Road, Liverpool, England, L6 6BW. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you would like a reply.

Note: The above games, and any of the other games mentioned in "Over There" in past issues, can be obtained from:
Computer Adventure World, 318 Kensington, Liverpool, England, L7 0EY. Telephone: 01144-51-263-6306.
Premier Mail Order, Trybridge Ltd., 8 Buckwins sq., Burnt Mills, Basildon, Essex, England, SS13 1BJ. Telephone: 01144-268-590-766; fax: 01144-268-590-076.
Software City, Unit 4, BDC, 21 Temple Street, Wolverhampton, WV2 4AN. Telephone: 01144 902 25304; 24-hour credit card hotline: 01144 902 25304.

All of the above telephone numbers assume you can dial direct. If you have any trouble contact the international operator. **CGW**



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The Game Is Afoot

Maxis' SimAnt

by Maxwell Eden

TITLE:	SimAnt: The Electronic Ant Colony
SYSTEMS:	Amiga, IBM, Macintosh
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNER:	Will Wright
PUBLISHER:	Maxis Software Orinda, CA

"Sir, there is a multi-legged creature crawling on your shoulder." — Mr. Spock?

Mardi Grass

Deceptively simple and seductively intriguing, *SimAnt* is the latest system simulation from **Maxis**. The game casts the player in the role of the Yellow Ant, commander of a black ant colony. By overcoming insect and human enemies, plus rival red ants and other perils, the black ants can prevail as masters of the universe in a suburban backyard.

Who'll "Ant"e Up?

Fans of **Maxis**' earlier system simulations, *SimCity* and *SimEarth*, will most likely appreciate the research, innovative thought, and meticulous attention to detail that went into creating the artificial life-form (A-life) presented in the game, the SimAnts. To faithfully replicate ant behavior, the designers of *SimAnt* drew on the Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Ants*.

To be honest, *SimAnt* probably won't blast the socks off game jockeys who are used to warping off on a mission to save the galaxy from an evil empire. Nevertheless, gamers who are willing to come out of hyperspace and down to Earth for a while won't be disappointed. Although patience and resourcefulness is the substance of the game, there is enough ant bloodshed to keep players on their toes, even if they're bent on carnage. Also, there are a few other surprises. For example, no one should ignore the mystery button; the spider may have a trick or two up its eight sleeves.

In fact, probing below the surface of the *SimAnt* game plot might just reveal that an exciting space opera storyline, for example, and the life struggle of an ant colony have the same dramatic elements in common. The horrible, nearly indestructible insect-like monster in the movie *Alien* was, after all, a souped-up, acid-puking, survivalist ant from a mixed marriage with a scorpion.

"Ant"ie Maim

The Yellow Ant, the player's alter ego, initiates all critical decisions about colony life in *SimAnt*. For example, the Yellow Ant enlists fellow ants to forage, fight, dig nests and post guards near food. The Yellow Ant can pick things up and put them down, handy for building pebble barricades against the red ants. When a particular action is completed, the Yellow Ant can release all or some of the recruits to go about their business.

Leading an ant army is dangerous duty. The Yellow Ant meets death in a variety of ways: spider jaws, ant combat, being chewed to pieces by an ant lion or finding itself unceremoniously chopped up in the lawn mower, to name a few. Fortunately for the squeamish, the yucky sounds accompanying the superbly rendered and graphically gruesome mayhem can be toggled off.

Re"ant"carnation

Although the Yellow Ant dies often, the player is not penalized for dying. The game continues in transcendental fashion out on six limbs and reincarnation too! Shirley MacAnt, are you listening? When the Yellow Ant dies, another Yellow Ant is born from the very next egg laid by the black queen.

The cycle of dying and continual rebirth of the Yellow Ant is a stroke of inspiration. Survival of the colony by protecting the queen is the prime ant directive; the death of a single ant has about the same significance as a larger, more complex organism losing a few cells (no big deal!).

Because individual ants are expendable to the colony in real life, the "reincarnation" convention creatively translates ant behavior into a logical A-life system that draws the player deeper into the nuances of the *SimAnt* world. As long as there is a black colony (meaning there is at least one black queen), there will be a Yellow Ant for the player to control.

Invasion of a Body Snatcher

The Yellow Ant also has the power to transfer its player-controllable persona to any other live adult black ant. Players will certainly opt for becoming a powerful Yellow soldier ant with its over-

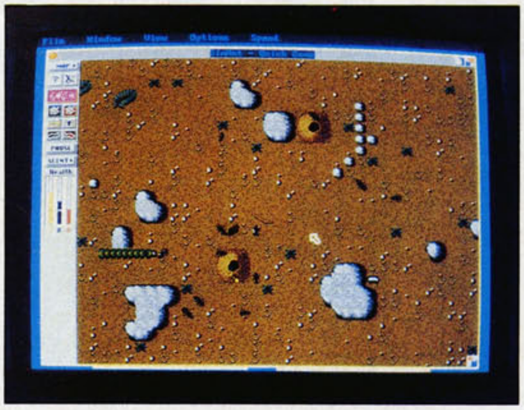


sized crushing mandibles whenever attacking enemies or defending the colony.

Players can select from three levels of play with increasingly faster speed modes for those in a hurry. Although *SimAnt*'s strength lies in free-form experimentation with the A-life system, there are points for players inclined to keep score and games can be saved for continued play at a later time.

Quick game: The Yellow Ant is in charge of one black colony versus one red colony. The player must gather as much food (antipasto is no doubt an ant favorite) as possible — quickly, attack the red ants and kill their queen. This game is usually a wrap in under an hour, one way or the other, since the player loses if the black queen dies first.

Full game: This game begins like a "Quick" game, but the play is more complex. It is possibly closest to playing an indefinite game of ant checkers. The Yellow Ant's trail to victory means taking over the backyard by overcoming the deadly perils mentioned earlier, annihilating all the competing red ant colonies (ants take no prisoners), breeding queens and males for nuptial flights (ant elopes?) to found new colonies and, finally, driving the human from the scene by infesting the home. Other hazards include insecticides, ant-crushing human feet and rain (which can flood nests and kill queens).



In addition to directing the colonization of the backyard by controlling ant behavior, the player can send the Yellow Ant to any area that has a black colony. Choosing a patch that also has a red colony allows the player to engage the enemy in mortal combat over disputed turf. If the Yellow Ant is not an aggressive planner, all the black queens will die of starvation or be killed by the red ants as they eventually overrun the yard and win.

Experimental game: As ant god, the player creates a custom playing arena just to see what happens. From a special experimental tools bar, point and click, for example, to upset the balance of power by creating more red ants than black; place scent trails, alarm trails, obstacles, food in difficult to get at areas, and include mazes to see how the ants respond. The player decides when the game is over or, once the individual scenario is invented, a click into Quick game mode produces the Yellow Ant.

Ants Do Windows

An on-screen tutorial provides the gamer with the basic understanding for controlling the Yellow Ant and the colony's behavior patterns. Giving orders and getting around the playing field is unobtrusively accomplished through a combination of icon clicking and speedy keyboard commands that activate actions and windows. A history window displays graphs of black and red ant statistics, an information window supplies facts and strategic tips about real ants and a status window provides feedback on the player's efficiency as an ant. On-line help explaining windows and icons is always available and helpful.

There are two special control windows. Caste control regulates what type and percentage of ants are born as breeders, workers and soldiers. Most ants in a colony are sterile females, including the workers and soldiers. Behavior control oversees the energy devoted to ant activities: foraging, digging and nursing. Depending on circumstances, the player must strike a balance between caste and behavior management for the colony to thrive.

While the default autopilot-type modes regulating caste and behavior do a fair job of supervising colony activities, they cannot always correct for every predicament — that's why there is a Yellow Ant. The player, via a three-way joystick-style panel in the control windows, can manually override the auto setting to adjust caste and behavior ratios for unanticipated events such as: the colony needs more food (increase foraging), the red ants are attacking (breed more soldiers), and so on. For quicker response, the player can define up to three preset buttons in both the caste and behavior control windows for strategic moves or emergencies.

To control the Yellow Ant and the behavior of the colony, players can choose from a wide variety of perspectives: a close-up overhead view of the realistic terrain to a global picture of the entire backyard, and other useful angles. From the Map Window, the player can change views, access tools and get analytical data on the health and growth of the black and red ant colonies. A cross-section view of the underground shows what's going on inside a particular nest. While in surface view, players with larger monitors can toggle on the caste and behavior windows (without crowding the screen) and watch how automatic or manually set ratios influence what's taking place among the ants.

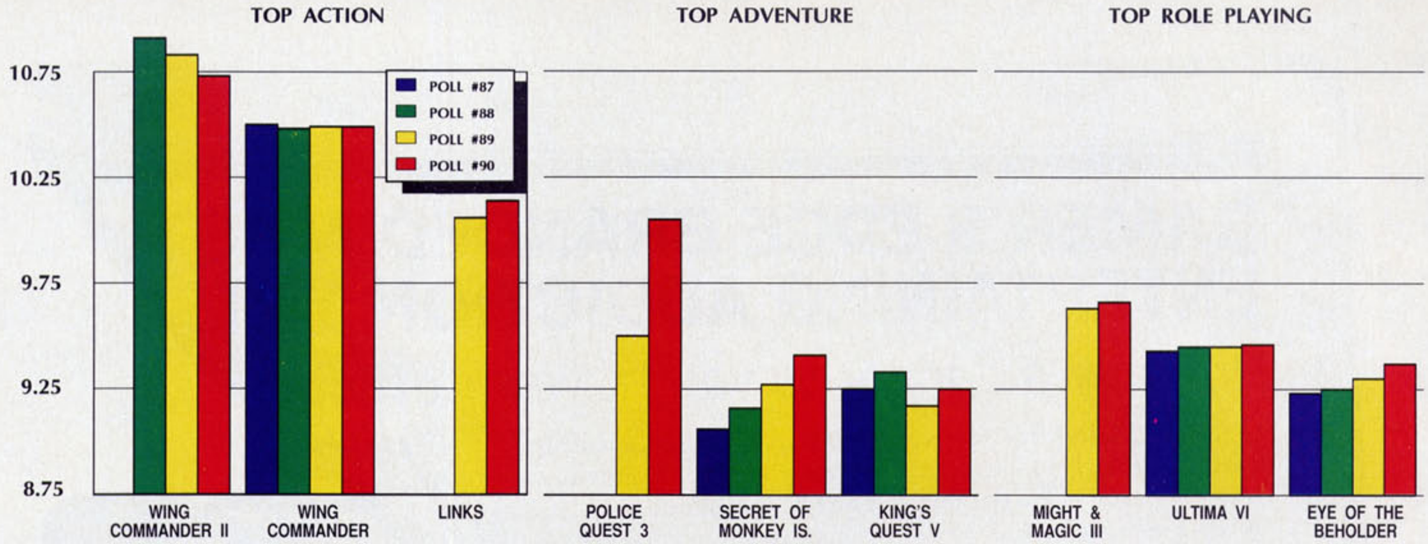
The yard level view displays all 192 square patches that make up the game universe, including the house with the animated human, dog and cat. Players can toggle between a full or interior view of the house. Yard level presents two perspectives necessary in full games: the strategic view shows which ant colony rules a particular patch; the graphic view displays the relative population of each patch in bar charts. Also at this level is the button to begin the mating cycle that produces more queens, the key to colonizing the yard.

Ant Misbehavin'

The Macintosh version has a few minor bugs which, while not detrimental to play, are particularly annoying when compared to an otherwise fluid design. Sounds are generally solid, but some effects (mostly music) collide and are choppy. Hitting the mystery button a specific number of times can freeze things up (a minute can feel like an hour) until a particular cycle has taken place. All one has to do is toggle off the music and these bugs won't byte. Also, if a player moves the Yellow Ant to a black colony inside the house while it's raining, the screen looks like an ant hallucinating from insecticide. **Maxis** is aware of these bugs and fixes are in order for the next release. IBM and Amiga versions are not infested with these problems.

It's a Small World After All

Players seeking a non-linear, unconventional and provocative strategy simulation will hit paydirt with *SimAnt*. The game is easy to get into, stimulating, fun, and becomes increasingly challenging. The depth of game control, while complex, is well-integrated so as not to be a nuisance, plus the *SimAnt* concept offers fascinating science to boot. Indeed, *SimAnt* will surely invade and colonize classrooms from elementary school to university and students will love it. **CGW**



Action/Arcade (AC):
Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.

Adventure (AD):
Games that allow you to take an alter ego through a storyline or series of events.

Role-Playing Adventure (RP):
Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).

Top Ten Games

Game Title, Rating
Source, Category

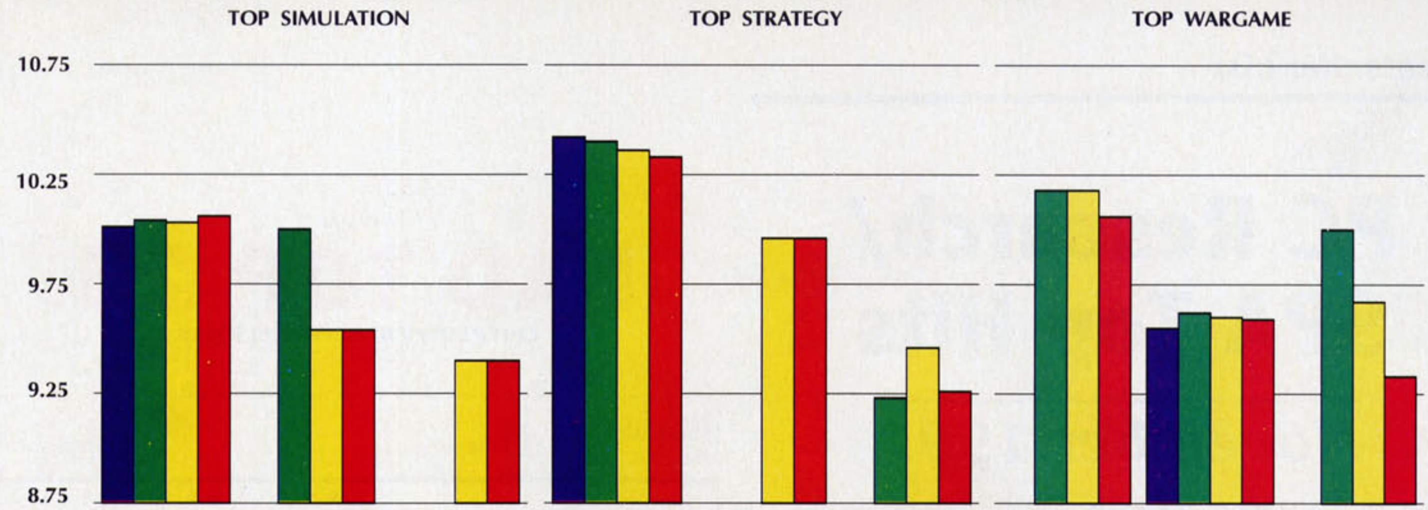
Rank	Game Title	Source	Category	Rating
1	Wing Commander II	Origin	AC	10.73
2	Wing Commander	Origin	AC	10.49
3	Railroad Tycoon	Microprose	ST	10.33
4	Links	Access	AC	10.14
5	Red Baron	Dynamix	SI	10.06
6	The Perfect General	QQP	WG	10.06
7	Police Quest 3	Sierra	AD	10.05
8	NFL Pro League Football	Micro Sports	ST	9.96
9	Wayne Gretzky Hockey II	Bethesda Softworks	ST	9.82
10	Might & Magic III	New World Computing	RP	9.66

The two *Wing Commanders* continue to blow away all comers, according to our readers. Sports continue a strong run on the Top Ten with a ninth-place debut for **Bethesda**'s *Wayne Gretzky Hockey II*. *WGHII* is the third sports game to break into the Top Ten in the past two months. ➤

The CGW

No.	Name	Source	Category	Rating
11	Warlords	SSG	WG,ST	9.59
12	Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe	Lucasfilm	SI	9.54
13	Ultima VI	Origin	RP	9.46
14	Lemmings	Psygnosis	AC	9.44
15	The Secret of Monkey Island	Lucasfilm	AD	9.41
16	F-117A	Microprose	SI	9.40
17	Eye of the Beholder	SSI	RP	9.37
18	Western Front	SSI	WG	9.33
19	The Lost Admiral	QQP	ST	9.26
20	King's Quest V	Sierra	AD	9.25
21	Gunship 2000	Microprose	SI	9.22
	PGA Tour Golf	Electronic Arts	AC	9.22
23	Wings	Cinemaware	AC	9.14
24	Second Front	SSI	WG	9.12
25	Quest for Glory II	Sierra	AD,RP	9.11
	Megafortress	Three-Sixty	SI,ST	9.11
27	Bane of the Cosmic Forge	Sir-Tech	RP	9.10
28	Harpoon	Three-Sixty	WG	9.09
29	Mech Warrior	Activision	ST,SI	9.08
	Silent Service II	Microprose	SI	9.08
31	No Greater Glory	SSI	WG	9.07
32	Battlehawks 1942	Lucasfilm	AC,SI	9.05
33	Chuck Yeager's Air Combat	Electronic Arts	SI	9.04
	Red Storm Rising	Microprose	SI	9.04
35	Command HQ	Microplay	WG,ST	9.00
	Quest for Glory	Sierra	RP	9.00
37	Ultima V	Origin	RP	8.99
38	Space Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.98
	Martian Memorandum	Access	AD	8.98
40	Space Quest III	Sierra	AD	8.97
	Sword of Aragon	SSI	WG,ST	8.97
42	Powermonger	Electronic Arts	ST	8.96
43	Wasteland	Electronic Arts	RP	8.95
44	Pools of Darkness	SSI	RP	8.94
45	Overrun	SSI	WG	8.93
46	Falcon	Spectrum Holobyte	SI	8.90
47	Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf	Accolade	ST	8.89
	Martian Dreams	Origin	RP	8.89
	Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball	SSI	AC,ST	8.89
50	NFL Challenge	XOR Corporation	ST	8.87
51	Romance of the 3 Kingdoms	Koei	ST,RP	8.86
52	Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	SI	8.85
53	Populous	Electronic Arts	ST	8.84
54	Elvira	Accolade	RP	8.82
55	Might & Magic II	New World	RP	8.81

Games are often listed in more than one category. In this case, the first listed category is considered primary. In order



Simulation (SI):
Games based on first-person perspectives of real-world environments.

Strategy (ST):
Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem-solving.

Wargames (WG):
Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.

Poll

➤ **Sierra**'s *Police Quest 3* showed a dramatic rise in CGW Poll #90. **SSI**'s *Western Front* showed an equally dramatic drop, but still held onto third place in the Wargame category. (However, *Warlords* is ready and waiting to get back on the charts.) *The Secret of Monkey Island* is showing a steady climb.

No.	Name	Source	Category	Rating
	Rules of Engagement	Mindcraft	ST	8.81
57	The Magic Candle	Mindcraft	RP	8.80
	LHX Attack Chopper	Electronic Arts	AC	8.80
	Rise of the Dragon	Dynamix/Sierra	AD	8.80
60	Gateway to the Savage Frontier	SSI	RP	8.79
61	Bard's Tale III	Electronic Arts	RP	8.77
62	Bandit Kings	Koei	ST,RP	8.75
	Heart of China	Dynamix	AD	8.75
64	Covert Action	Microprose	AC,AD	8.73
	The Adventures of Willy Beamish	Dynamix	AD	8.73
66	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	WG	8.72
	Battlechess	Interplay	ST	8.72
68	Breach 2	Omnitrend	ST,RP	8.71
	Starflight II	Electronic Arts	RP	8.71
70	Neuromancer	Interplay	AD	8.70
71	F-15 Strike Eagle II	Microprose	SI	8.69
72	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	WG	8.67
	Curse of the Azure Bonds	SSI	RP	8.67
74	Indiana Jones/Graphic Adv.	Lucasfilm	AD	8.65
	Ballistyx	Psygnosis	AC	8.65
76	Action Stations	RAW Entertainment	WG	8.64
	Conan the Cimmerian	Virgin	AC,RP	8.64
78	Armada 2525	Interstel	ST	8.63
	SimAnt	Maxis	ST	8.63
80	Wayne Gretzky Hockey (Original)	Bethesda	AC,ST	8.62
81	Pool of Radiance	SSI	RP	8.61
82	King's Quest IV	Sierra	AD	8.59
83	Buck Rogers	SSI	RP	8.57
	Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball	SSI	ST,AC	8.57
85	Chessmaster 2100	Software Toolworks	ST	8.56
	Wide World of Sports Boxing	Data East	AC	8.56
87	Genghis Khan	Koei	ST,RP	8.54
88	Future Wars	Interplay	AD	8.53
89	Panzer Strike	SSI	WG	8.51
	Leisure Suit Larry III	Sierra	AD	8.51
	Sword of the Samurai	Microprose	ST,RP	8.51
92	Savage Empire	Origin	RP	8.48
93	Champions of Krynn	SSI	RP	8.45
	Jetfighter II	Velocity	SI	8.45
95	Manhunter 2	Sierra	AD	8.42
96	Nobunaga's Ambition II	Koei	ST,RP	8.40
97	TV Sports Football	Cinemaware	AC,ST	8.39
98	Strike Fleet	Electronic Arts	WG	8.37
99	Fire Brigade	Panther	WG	8.34
100	BattleTech II: Revenge	Infocom	WG,RP	8.33

Hall of Fame

The Games in CGW's Hall of Fame Have Been Highly Rated by our Readers over Time. They are Worthy of Play by All.

Bard's Tale I
Chessmaster
Dungeon Master
Earl Weaver Baseball
Empire
F19 Stealth Fighter
Gettysburg
Gunship
Harpoon
Kampfgruppe
King's Quest V
M-1 Tank Platoon
Mech Brigade
Might & Magic
M.U.L.E.
Pirates
SimCity
Starflight
Their Finest Hour
Ultima III
Ultima IV
War in Russia
Wizardry

to be recognized as the "Top Game" in a given category, a game must be listed as being primarily of that specific type.

PC Research/ SPA Top Hits

November 1991

Games (MS-DOS)

Rank	Title and Source
1	*Mike Ditka Ultimate Football* (Accolade)
2	*Leisure Suit Larry V* (Sierra On-Line)
3	*Police Quest 3* (Sierra On-Line)
4	*F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0* (Microprose)
5	*Wing Commander II* (Origin)
6	*King's Quest V* (Sierra On-Line)
7	*Gunship 2000* (Microprose)
8	*Flight Simulator 4.0* (Microsoft)
9	*Links* (Access)
10	*The Adventures of Willy Beamish* (Sierra On-Line)
11	*Might & Magic III* (New World)
12	*AD&D Collector's Edition* (Strategic Simulations)
13	*Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* (Lucasfilm)
14	*Pools of Darkness* (Strategic Simulations)
15	*Castles* (Interplay)
16	*Lemmings* (Psygnosis)
17	*Earl Weaver Baseball 2.0* (Electronic Arts)
18	*WordTris* (Spectrum Holobyte)
19	*Home Alone* (Capstone)
20	*Chessmaster 3000* (Software Toolworks)

Home Education (MS-DOS)

Rank	Title and Source
1	*Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* (Broderbund)
2	*Where in the U.S.A. Is Carmen Sandiego?* (Broderbund)
3	*SimCity* (Maxis)
4	*Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?* (Broderbund)
5	*Math Blaster Plus* (Davidson)
6	*Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?* (Broderbund)
7	*The Treehouse* (Broderbund)
8	*Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* (Software Toolworks)
9	*Reader Rabbit II* (Learning Company)
10	*Treasure Mountain* (Learning Company)

These lists are based on units sold by Software Etc., Babbage's, Waldensoftware and Electronic Boutique. For more information, please call PC Research at (703) 435-1025. **CGW**

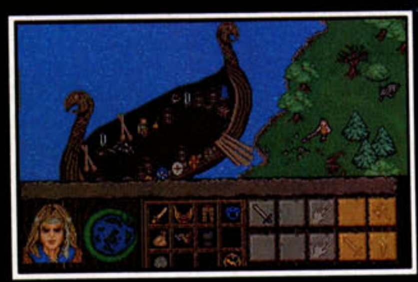
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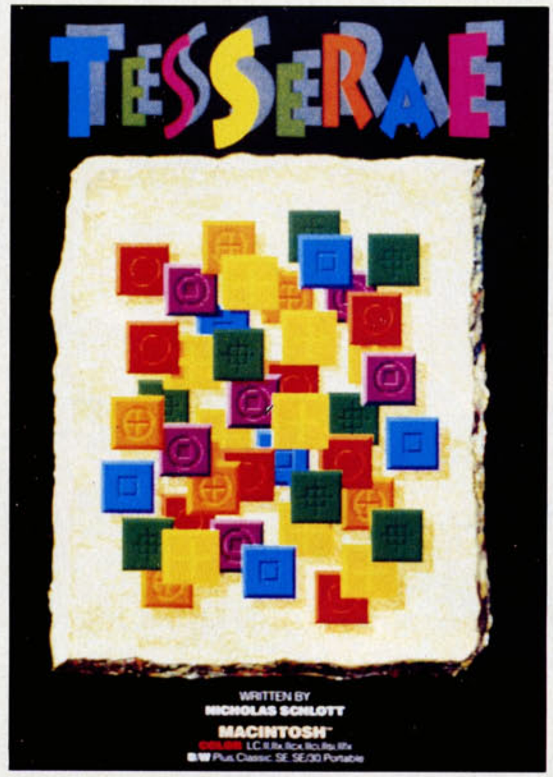
Mental Mosaics

Inline Design's Tesserae

by R. Bradley Andrews

TITLE:	Tesserae
SYSTEM:	Macintosh
PRICE:	$49.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNER:	Nicholas Schlott
PUBLISHER:	Inline Designs 5 West Mountain Road Sharon, CT 06069





True puzzle games have a small, but loyal, following. With products ranging from card games to more generic puzzles like those in Cliff Johnson's *3 in Three* or Carol Manley's *Are We There Yet?*, a good computer interface can make these even more accessible without all the bookkeeping required in most board and paper versions.

Tesserae is yet another solid entry into this field. It appears to be based on a shareware game released a while back, but is greatly enhanced from there. Many new elements have been added and it virtually looks like a brand new product.

"Tessera" is the root word for the game's name (*Tesserae* is plural) and refers to the colored stone or glass that forms a building block for mosaic patterns. As the alert reader has already surmised, these "tiles" serve as the fundamental pieces of the game.

The game's action is very simple. Each game begins with pieces randomly arranged about the surface of the playing board. The object is to clear off all but one final piece. The game will end when this point is reached or when no further legal moves are possible.

There are seven different varieties of tesserae to enhance the player's challenge. Primaries are the basic building blocks and are, in turn, represented by one of the three primary colors: red, yellow or blue. Each piece is the size of a square grid element of the playing board and has a geometric shape drawn on its surface: circle, plus or square, according to the colors shown.

The secondary pieces, naturally enough, represent one of the possible pairs of primaries, combining both the color and shape of the component pieces. Tertiaries are a combination of all three primaries and are, therefore, presented as colored gray, with all three shapes drawn on their surfaces.

Pieces are moved by jumping, in any of the eight grid directions, over other pieces in a manner similar to checkers. The moves are a bit difficult to explain, but the on-line rules quickly explain the various valid moves through interactive presentations of them in action. Basically, primaries are easier to both jump with and to clear off the board. In addition to the rules, selecting a piece automatically lists all valid destinations and a "Show all valid moves" option is available from the menu.

A Switch in Time, Plays Nine (Game Play)

Shortly after starting the game, players will be ready to attempt one of the game's nine boards (which range in configuration from the fairly easy eight-by-six rectangular board to the challenging eleven by seven X-shaped board). These are ordered according to difficulty and, as they get more difficult, contain more composite pieces in the initial layout. The game's three difficulty levels also affect this initial layout and, of course, increase the difficulty of clearing the board. Players have the option of playing

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any individual board configurations as a single game, aiming for the fewest remaining pieces in the fewest number of jumps. Players may also compete in a tournament mode in which all nine boards must be completed in sequence. In the tournament mode, the goal is to complete all the boards with the lowest combined minimum.

Colorful Challenge (Graphics)

While the game, like any mosaic, is best in color and, like many products with quality graphics, can use both 4-bit and 8-bit color modes, it plays just fine in black and white. The only loss is that all pieces are colored gray and must be differentiated solely by the shape drawn on the tile. 8-bit color is, naturally, by far the best and looks very nice. Nevertheless, the game uses a clever routine that causes the program to automatically sense any changes in color depth during play and to immediately adjust the artwork accordingly. This is a nice touch that many games skip.

Connoisseurs of computerized conundrums will also appreciate the many options that the game provides for modifying the use of sounds, music and the animation speed. While the sound and music in the game are minimal, since it doesn't require much of either, those included are well done and complement play. Watching the final piece cycle through a series of colors and shapes, crumble apart and then blow away with the wind, complete with sound effects, is a *very* satisfying climax to a successful game.

Follow the Flashing Dot (Mechanics)

The interface is simple, and moving a piece involves clicking first on the jumping piece and then on a valid destination (highlighted with a flashing dot). Moves are cleared by clicking on any place *other* than a valid destination. The game will notify the player if no further moves are possible.

Experienced gamers will quickly note that each beginning tile layout is completely random. Therefore, some layouts are virtually impossible to clear on the more complicated boards. Fortunately, the game supports "Undo" and "Redo" commands which enable players to try various different strategies to solve each individual board. Plus, the commands are most useful toward the end of the puzzle when the iterations become geometrically more complex.

Tesserae's only possible weakness seems to be that one can lose interest in simply playing solitaire with the game after one finally figures a strategy for clearing all twenty-seven of the different difficulty level/board type combinations. However, this will take quite a while for most gamers to accomplish and provided several weeks of active play for this reviewer.

Fortunately, the inclusion of a high score list for each board/difficulty level combination and each type of tournament play featured in the game not only mitigates this problem, but also provides a goal for further play.

Tesserae is a fine game from a very solid Macintosh game company and should be seriously considered by any Macintosh owner. It provides many hours of challenge with a simple but elegant design that is sure to please anyone who enjoys using his or her head. **CGW**

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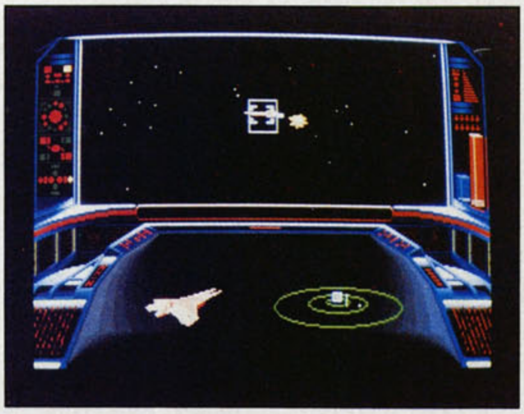
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by Stanley Trevena

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PUBLISHER:	Microprose Hunt Valley, MD



Exploration and colonization serve as the foundation for many science fiction stories. In *Hyperspeed*, players find themselves seeking out alien life-forms in something of the same manner in which a certain 25-year-old televis-ion show sought them out. Of course, *Hyperspeed* will not appear alien to *all* gamers — many will recognize it as a direct descendent of *Lightspeed*.

In *Hyperspeed*, as in *Lightspeed* (since the latter is actually a part of the former), the player is placed in the far future. Earth is an ecological wasteland and the population must evacuate to other worlds in order to give Earth time to recover from the wounds of humanity. Huge *Conestoga*-class transport ships are sent out to seed other clusters with human populations. The player, in turn, pilots a *Trailblazer*-series dreadnought ahead of the transports to explore new worlds, mine resources, make treaties and rid the cluster of any aliens that are a threat to the human colonies.

The player must interact with the aliens and decide how well they will coexist with the human colonies. *Hyperspeed*'s main claim to fame over some space opera-style computer games is this player-directed open-endedness. The player is left to choose which direction to take, which aliens to make peace with and which ones to destroy. There are moral decisions that must be made with no "right" answers imposed by the game designers. Every decision not only affects the way individual alien races interact with the player, but may also affect the way certain other alien races deal with the player.

As noted earlier, *Lightspeed* is actually part of *Hyperspeed*. That is, the two star clusters from *Lightspeed* are the first two of four in *Hyperspeed*. The keystrokes and commands are also the same. This may disappoint some who have been waiting for a new add-on disk for *Lightspeed* or the much rumored *Lightspeed II*, both of which have been speculated about on the on-line services since *Lightspeed* first appeared.

Hyperspeed is both of these, an enhancement and a sequel. Many more aliens have been added, as well as two very large star clusters. The game has been given a **Sierra**-style game introduction in which the player is given the history and goal of the game, a preview of some of the alien ships and is treated to a boarding and launching sequence.

The game interface is easy to use and well conceived. The player serves as a one-man crew, handling navigation, defenses and maintenance of the engine room, as well as any piloting. All of these jobs can be controlled with a combination of keyboard, mouse and joystick. The status of ship systems can be monitored from small icons positioned around the main viewer, making it easy to assess damage during battle and decide if a quick trip to the engine room is called for. "Buttons" are used extensively for most operations and flight controls can be toggled between the traditional airplane-style controls and directional control. Navigation is especially easy, since the player is given a 3-D rotating navigational screen and simply chooses a destination and presses one of two "buttons" on the controls. Once the destination is selected, the player uses the spindrive to travel to that system.

Along the way, the player may be attacked or have a ship enter into its space. Being attacked drops the player to normal speed. Then, the player must either meet the aliens' demands or defeat them in battle in order to continue to a selected destination. The player is given the option of attack in the case of another ship crossing the player's path.

It *is* possible to escape from any combat by using the escape pod. However, using this method of escape destroys ten components from one's engine room. Using an escape pod will return the player to his or her home base and a new ship. Naturally, this maneuver consumes valuable time and the player loses *all* inventory from the previous ship.

Orientation for Pilots (Game Play)

When entering a new system, the first order of business is to launch a probe. If the system is unoccupied, an information screen with the type, temperature, atmosphere and resources of each planet will be displayed. Resources can be mined from planets by launching mining complexes. The ship can only carry three mining complexes, so some systems will require several visits in order to claim all resources.

If alien ships are present and no probe is launched or any movement is made toward the aliens, combat will automatically result. Therefore, communication with alien races is vital to the success of any pilot. The communications interface may look simplistic at first, but it offers plenty of information. One can get descriptions of aliens, initiate trading transactions and forge peace treaties. The player must not only read between the lines of communication, but also watch the body language of the alien itself. A clear example of this is found in the third cluster, Sassanid. In this cluster there is an alien race of doglike creatures known as the Halicot. Inquiries about either the Zeveult or Automata cause the Halicots' ears to stand up, and they duck for cover. Obviously, these races strike fear into the Halicot but what that means to the human race is for the player to discover.

Trade is the only means by which the player can enhance his ship with new components and obtain rare planetary resources. The trade screen is split in half, with the player's resources on the left and the alien offerings on the right. The player selects needed items while offering items from his stores in trade. A slide bar indicates how well balanced the current trade is; acceptance comes only when the trade is balanced. Once an equitable deal is arranged, the player accepts the trade and can go directly to the engine room to use the newly acquired parts or return to the communications screen.

The engine room is a wonderful part of the game. All systems in the engine room are constructed from components. Many components can be used in several different systems and extra components are kept in reserve for future use. To fill an empty space or replace a damaged component, the player clicks on a component space and a new component is taken from reserves and

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inserted. The spindrive, thrusters, forward and rear screens, blaster turret and main guns are all systems which can be accessed on this screen. At the start of the game, each system is at some fraction of full power. So, to reach maximum efficiency, the player must add to and enhance each system. For example, the player will want to enhance the spindrive system early on, since this will increase fuel efficiency. Players will soon learn that shifting components between combat and drive systems can help a player early on, as long as they are ready to make some quick changes should combat be unexpectedly encountered.

Combat, while not the main focus, does become necessary. The Trailblazer carries a ten-missile chassis that can carry either guided missiles, fighters or kamikazes. Naturally, each type of weapon has its particular strength. Guided missiles can be launched in a "fire and forget" mode at moving targets; precision runs at alien ship's defenses can be executed with a fighter and defenses can be neutralized when a kamikaze delivers the maximum amount of damage. All of the alien ships are unique and have different defenses, so each one is its own puzzle.

As for defense, the blaster turret is the player's primary weapon, since it allows for fast 360-degree movement and is good for attacking enemy fighters and incoming missiles. Because of the Trailblazer's size and speed, the main gun is relatively ineffective against agile fighters and is best used for long-range attacks on large ships and star bases.

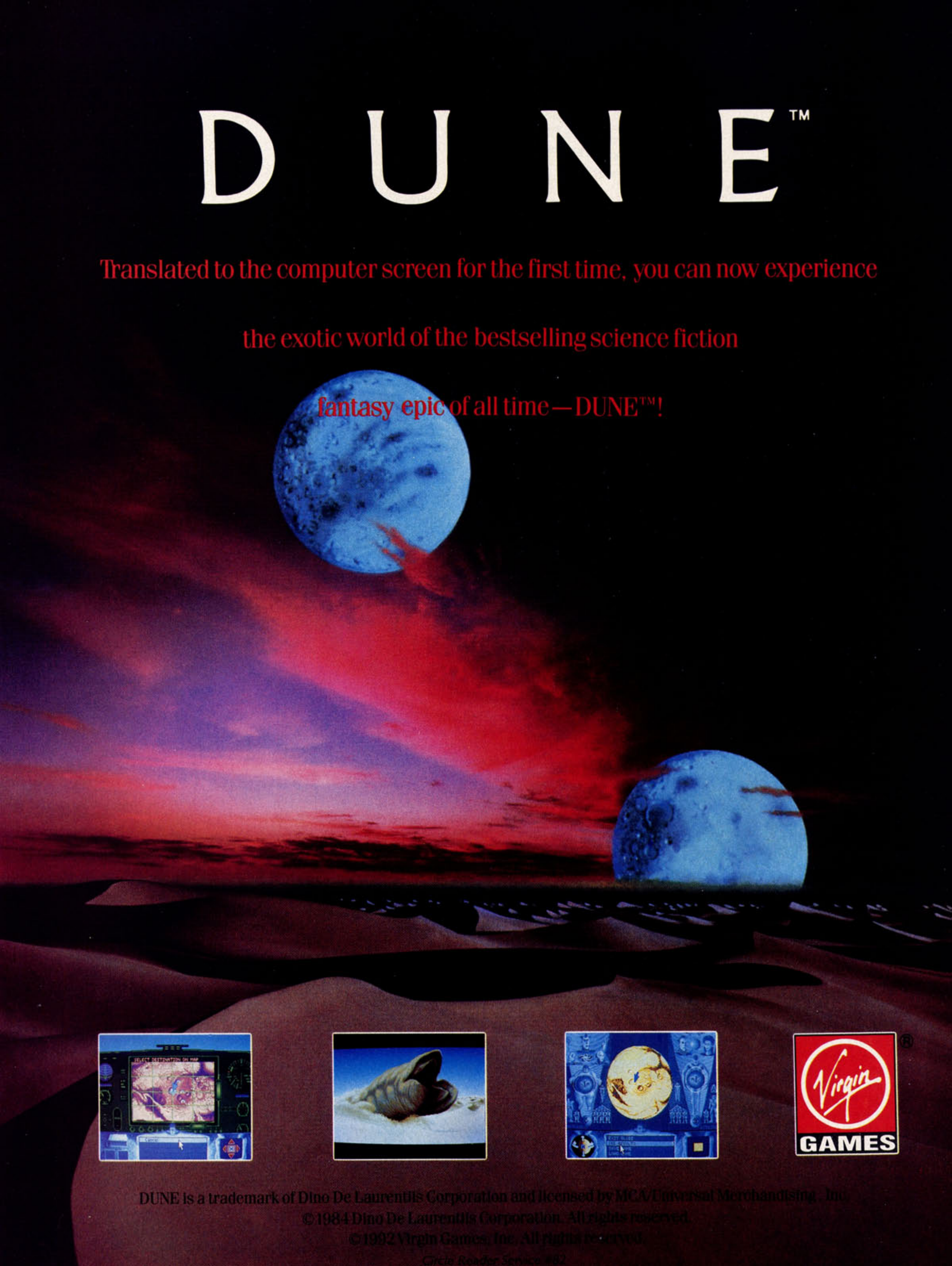
Time is of the essence in the protagonist's quest for a new home for the colonists, since they can only survive so long in transit. The colony status screen displays the number of claimed resources; in each cluster the player will have to secure a set amount of each resource. Also displayed are the races that have been eliminated from the cluster, peace treaties secured and the availability of a suitable planet for the player's colonists. A performance rating lets the player know how well he or she is doing in the cluster.

New players will want to establish trade and fuel supply routes early in the game. Most will find trade to be useful in accumulating parts and stocking extras. One should always use the component value screen in order to exploit differences in component values between alien races (arbitraging); this will save trips back to home base for additional data casings.

Also, one should always take the time to secure alien-specific resources before attacking or eliminating an alien race. When access to specific components has been cut off, a last-ditch escape pod trip can restore the needed components to your ship at a heavy price in time and lost stores. The player is allowed a large number of saves and can use them to explore what-if situations, allowing the player to take a step back from a wrong decision.

Should We Get "Hyper?" (Conclusions)

With so many space-related games on the market, it's hard for players to decide which ones to add to their collections of software. Shoot-'em-up-style space arcade games and pure strategy games are abundant on the software shelves. *Hyperspeed* offers a refreshing change of pace to this genre, a kinder, gentler one that centers around exploration and communication, with combat playing a secondary role. *Hyperspeed* will reward players with smoothly animated graphics, excellent sound and a well-developed, sometimes tongue-in-cheek, storyline. **CGW**


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Circle Reader Service #82

Warning: Although "The Scorpion's Tale" takes place in a warm and comfortable tavern of the mind, complete with a nice, cozy fire of vibrant images, our resident storyteller conjures up illuminating hints about games. **If the gentle reader eschews hints, let him beware!**

Scorpion's Tale

Sierra's Robin Hood: Conquests of the Longbow

Sigh. They seem to be making the winters shorter every year. Just when I've gotten cozily settled in for the cold months... poof! Spring rears its ugly head again. Of course, *you* probably don't mind; I bet you're the type that takes off for warm spots when the chill winds blow — someplace sunny and bright and secluded, like the woods of Merrie Olde England.

Robin Hood: Conquests of the Longbow gives you the chance to lead the Merry Men of Sherwood Forest, romance Maid Marian, perform assorted rescues and outwit the evil Sheriff of Nottingham. Most of this is done in adventure game-style, although there are a couple of places in the game where a bit of arcade action is necessary.

Fortunately, you can adjust the arcade difficulty from really hard to pushover (practically an automatic win), so getting past these sequences can be easy or difficult as you choose. The downside is that your score depends, in part, on the difficulty level. The higher the difficulty, the better your score will be. On the upside, you can complete the game without garnering a perfect score.

In fact, you can finish this one without doing a lot. Maid Marian and the Merry Men will usually be able to pull off whatever Robin doesn't manage. However, this will be reflected in both the score and the ever-diminishing number of outlaws throughout the game. So, the more Robin does on his own, the better.

Mapping isn't needed in this game, except in one spot. Most travel is accomplished by calling up the map of Sherwood and environs, and simply clicking on where you want Robin to visit. In some indoor locations (such as the two monasteries), Robin stands on a floor plan, rather like the one in *Conquests of Camelot*, and you click on the place you want him to go.

This is also a very linear adventure, marked by days. Each day begins and ends at Robin's hidden camp in Sherwood. A day usually doesn't end until Robin has done everything he's supposed to (the famous **Sierra** "Must Do"s) but there are exceptions. For instance, if Robin is unable to rescue the Widow's sons, the day will end with the Merry Men having performed the operation in the meantime.

Day 1: A good time to visit the locations on the map. Robin will have to find the outlook and the archery glade on his own. (Neither are far away; watch to see which



ways Little John and Will Scarlet go.) After that, the outlook will appear on the map, but not the glade (for reasons I've never determined). Robin can practice at the glade for as long as you like and he can come back for more practice most anytime. At day's end, Robin overindulges in ale and dreams of Maid Marian.

Day 2: Well well, perhaps it was more than a mere dream. Robin wakes up, clutching half an emerald heart. Where could that have come from? Even the Merry Men have no good answers to this question. However, mysteries must be set aside when Will tells Robin that a cobbler in town wants to see him on an urgent matter — and that Robin must bring a woman's slipper as proof of identity. Hmm, how might he get such an item? The Widow isn't likely to oblige. Now, what other women has Robin seen lately — and where?

Day 3: Robin has the slipper. Now, he has to get into Nottingham. Unfortunately, he's become too famous to just stroll in through the gates wearing that rather distinctive Lincoln green outfit. Looks like a little disguise is necessary here. Once Robin has that, he can finally visit Lobb (the cobbler) and learn about the treachery of Prince John, the Sheriff and a few other not-so-nice people. Now Robin has a real mission in life: raising money for King Richard's ransom. (Too bad there was no TV in those days; a telethon would have been much faster and easier — but possibly not as much fun!)

Day 4: Time to have a real chat with Marian at last. In this game, Marian is much more than a mere love interest; she also happens to be a Druid and very active in the underground working for Richard's release. She has a little request for Robin: enter the Monastery of the Fens (run by bad guys, of course) and retrieve a special scroll. He won't, however, get around to that now, but as someone once said, tomorrow is another day (and if this day hasn't ended yet, perhaps a visit to other locations will help).

Day 5: Now, things begin to get interesting. Robin needs a way of getting into that monastery, and a quarterstaff duel is the only means of obtaining the necessary items. I found it easier to use the mouse for this sequence; it's simple, but be sure to read the docs so you know what you're doing.

At the monastery, Robin will have to pass a test to prove he's a member of the order. This is part of the game's copy protection. Open the manual to the pages with the gem lore. Read the Guardian's clues carefully, then pick the proper gems. Since one mistake here will be the end of Robin, it's a good idea to save before talking to the monk at the door.

Once inside, a little exploration will quickly bring Robin to the room that has Marian's scroll. Make sure Robin reads the others, most especially the one about the monastery's history; this information will come in handy later.

A further tour of the premises turns up Fulk, King Richard's jester, who is being tortured by the Prior. (Like I said, this place is run by bad guys.) Fulk, however, is suspicious and won't leave until Robin brings him a scroll. So, it's back to the Scribe Room for Robin.

This time, however, the Prior is there — and guess what he's examining? Right, Fulk's scroll. Somehow, Robin will have to find a way to get the Prior out of the room so he can snarf the scroll. This is likely to be thirsty work.

Now, Robin and Fulk can leave this den of iniquity. The front door is out of the question, but Fulk knows of a secret exit. Well, he knows part of it, anyway. Getting the grate open is something Robin has to figure out on his own. Here's where that history lesson can prove handy.

After a few tense minutes, Robin and Fulk make it safely to shore. Fulk goes on his way, but gives Robin the scroll and a special ring before he leaves. Both of these will be useful later.

Day 6: Another day of full activity for Robin. Much brings news that the Widow's three sons were betrayed in town, and imprisoned in the Sheriff's castle. Unless

Circle Reader Service #78

they're rescued soon, all three will hang. Time for another rescue!

First, of course, Robin needs another disguise. This is a simple matter, and before long, our hero is wandering around the monastery in Nottingham. Now is a good time to go out the back way and through the maze to the door in the hedge. This is the only time in the game you need to do any mapping, and it's important to know how to get to that door quickly later on. After this little excursion, it's time for Robin to have a chat with the Abbot (sorry, no Costello), who sends him off for a refill of ale.

At the tavern, Robin should play Nine Men's Morris. Here, you will have to rely on your own abilities; even with arcade set to the bottom, you can't win automatically (however, the difficulty setting determines how smart your opponent will be).

Now, Robin needs to find out about the shortcut back to the monastery. This is a very interesting shortcut, with two tunnels. One leads to the Abbot, the other to the castle dungeon. It's best to return to the Abbot first and hand over the ale.

When the monastery portion is finished, it's time to rescue the three boys. This would not be difficult, except for the two guards on duty. Hmmm. One of them sure has a powerful thirst. (Wonder if he's related to the Abbot?) Too bad he's broke and can't afford the ale he craves. I wonder if Robin could do something about that?

With the guards out of the way, bringing the boys up from the pit is easy. Then, it's just a matter of choosing the right way out of the place, and before long, the widow is reunited with her sons. She also gives Robin a small golden net.

Day 7: First off, let's take a look now at Fulk's scroll. This contains the secret word that opens the Abbot's box. Naturally, it isn't just spelled out in plain English. Then again, maybe it *is*, kinda. Like I said, first things first.

Once Robin knows the word, he can open the box and take the Ring of Fire. He won't need it for awhile yet, though, so don't be in too much of a rush to put it on.

Speaking of rushes (ahem), Robin still has that hand scroll Marian wanted, and now is as good a time as any to return it to her. She teaches him the secret Druid hand code (the hand and letters are printed in the hard copy manual), then asks Robin to pass the scroll along to the Queen's Spy at Saturday's fair. She also warns Robin that dark times are ahead, and he should gain the protection of the Green Man, who lives in the giant oak tree.

Robin can't wake or talk to the Green Man on his own; he'll need a little (and I mean little) help. Some careful thought on this, however, should net you the solution.

Even more thought will be necessary when Robin does talk to the Green Man. He has three riddles to ask (these are chosen randomly each time from a pool of riddles) and you're on your own, here. There are no clues anywhere to the answers; you must figure them out yourself, based on the contents of the riddles alone.

Day 8: Actually, several uneventful days have passed, and it's now time to visit the Fair. Not only does Robin have to pass along the scroll, there's that archery contest, with a gold arrow as first prize — a prize that would certainly help toward filling the pot for Richard's ransom.

Of course, this calls for yet another disguise. After a visit to the Costume Provision Place, Robin is ready for the Fair. This part is very simple. Handing off the scroll is easy, and talking to the various fair-goers is fun. (Although not necessary to completing the game, you have time to chat around.)

Then it's time for the archery contest. You have to be careful in the first two rounds and shoot fairly well. The final round, one arrow from each contestant, is a bit rigged in Robin's favor. That's the only explanation for my being able to pull off the famous "split the arrow down the middle" stunt.



You still need to aim carefully here, though.

Day 9: Morning dawns with an ominous warning from Will. The Sheriff was not pleased about the events at the contest and he's sent his men to scour the forest. This would be a good time to protect oneself.

After the danger is past, Robin can indulge in a little fun (after all the heavy action of the previous days) and nothing could be more fun than snookering the Sheriff, while filling the ransom coffers at the same time.

Once Robin is properly disguised (don't overlook the rouge) and inside the castle, much of what follows is automatic conversation and actions. There are a couple of things Robin has to do, but they are fairly obvious. On the other hand, this is the funniest part of the game, so sit back and enjoy the dialogue (and its aftermath!).

Day 10: Robin's good mood is quickly dispelled when Little John comes running with news of Marian's imminent immolation at the hands of the Abbot, who has accused her of witchcraft. This isn't something Robin can handle on his own; it's time to call the Merry Men and see what they can propose. Be sure to put on the Ring of Fire first.

Each of the five has a different rescue plan. Robin must choose one of them; he can't formulate his own. All of them will work. Some, however, will work better than others, and one (as you might suspect) works the best. Which? Well, you didn't go through that maze just to pass the time. Think about it.

Day 11: Finally, the big treasure trove is on its way from York. This is almost a replay of yesterday's events. The only difference is that the plans relate to taking the treasure train, rather than rescuing Marian. As before, Robin must choose one of them, and there is a "best plan" among them. I wouldn't fool around with those soldiers, in your place. The sooner they're eliminated, the better.

Day 12: Once again, the Sheriff sends his men to scour Sherwood (he was a trifle peeved over losing the treasure). Robin can avoid this the same way he did last time. Then he can go talk to the Queen's Knight, hand over all the money he's raised and, maybe, take a little vacation.

Only there's something a bit suspicious about this Knight. For one thing, he's pretty rude. For another, he doesn't recognize the special password. Uh, oh! Looks like the opposition got wind of the plan and sent in a ringer. This is not good.

Day 13 (lucky number?): Time for Robin's last act of "derring-do," namely rescuing the real knight. Disguise won't work this time, but magic certainly will. Magic will get Robin to the tower and up the tower, as well. That's the easy part. Even convincing the Knight to escape is easy.

The hard part is getting away safely. Robin has to climb back down the tower while dodging boulders. Yes, I'm afraid it's true: the active portion of the game ends on an arcade note. You have an opportunity to save the game just as Robin starts down. I suggest you take it.

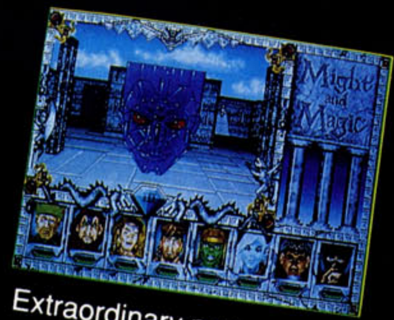
That pretty much wraps up the game. Beyond this point, everything is automatic. Just sit back and watch the events unfold. If you've done it all correctly, Robin comes out with honors and a bride. If you didn't — well — let's not think about it.

And that, as I see by the old invisible clock, is pretty much it for now. Remember if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

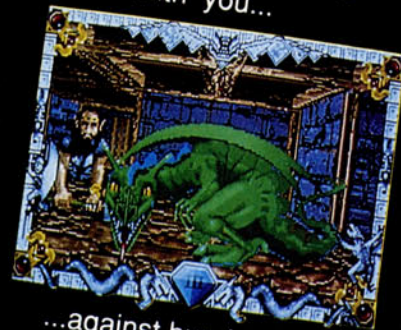
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Until next time, happy adventuring! **CGW**





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Circle Reader Service #61

Public Domain Computer Role-Playing Games

by Gerald Graef



Computer games have evolved rapidly in the last decade. Ten years ago, the market was dominated by text adventures and games with, at best, primitive character graphics. For most players, these games (e.g., *Temple of Apshai*, *Telengard* and Scott Adams games) were quickly overshadowed by *Wizardry* and the *Ultimas*. Yet, far from vanishing altogether, these games moved from the commercial market and now reside in the public domain.

Today, there are several solid public-domain CRPGs. In an era in which new games can become overnight sensations, only to be relegated to the old disk pile once they have been solved or the next game released, these venerable titles maintain an almost uncanny lure. Perhaps other games' fancy graphics wear thin. Or perhaps it is a difference in design; these games present problems to be solved, but do not specify any particular method by which this must be done. The most popular of these games are *NetHack*, *Moria* and *Ultra-Larn*. The best news is that each has recently seen a major new version.

Over the last decade of their existence, beginning with *Rogue*, the public-domain games have grown in size and complexity. *Hack*, one of the earliest games, was ported to microcomputers, each port introducing new features. Finally *NetHack* was created from the best elements of the ports along with a few new ideas. *NetHack* is a game which can now be found on virtually any computer, usually with only minor cosmetic differences. The current version is *NetHack* 3.0.10 with 3.1 currently in the works. Like its predecessors, the goal of *NetHack* is to wrest the Amulet of Yendor from the Wizard of Yendor. On the way to the Wizard, one must build up one's character, as well as find tools (including a large assortment of new ones) which will help. (The warhammer named Mjollnir — with apologies to Thor — and the broadsword named Stormbringer — with apologies to Elric — are especially helpful.) A major new feature is the special levels — the Tower of Vlad the Impaler, the Castle buried deep in the Earth and a special endgame level. Other helpful special levels — shops, beehives and several others — also pop up from time to time. The game also sports a much increased bestiary. Character generation consists of simply choosing a character class. This choice affects early play but is less important as the character progresses. *NetHack* is not a completely serious game, as is clearly seen when playing a tourist....

Another popular game is *Moria*. Named for the lands from J.R.R. Tolkien's books, the goal of *Moria* is to kill the nefarious Balrog. *Moria* is more of a hack-and-slash game than *NetHack* but sports the most in-depth character generation of any of the PD games. *Moria* has a wide variety of magic items and effect, as well as a wide variety of monsters (watch out for Evil Izzy — a quite annoying thief encountered deep in the dungeon). An interesting feature new to version 4 of *Moria* is a memory connected to the "Look" command. Using the "Look" command to assess a monster's potential threat, one is provided with both a basic description and a recall of the capabilities of the creature as the protagonist has already encountered them. Like *NetHack*, the latest versions have been written to allow easy porting. With *Moria*, it is even possible to transfer save files between some computers: start a character at home on an IBM PC and take it to work, to play it (at lunch, of course) on a Unix system.

The third game on our venue is *Ultra-Larn*. The original *Larn* is similar in many respects to *NetHack*. The player's daughter is dying and the only hope is the Potion of Cure Dia. The problem, of course, is getting the potion — reputed to lie in the depths of a volcano inhabited by dragons, naga and various other creatures. *Ultra-Larn* is very similar to the original but features a deeper dungeon, more monsters and new toys — some of which are essentially required to win the game. Whereas the original *Larn* had no choices or random elements in character creation, *Ultra-Larn* allows the player to choose a character class. From Wizards and Fighters to the esoteric "Rambo," each makes the opening game a little different, but the class becomes of less importance as one gains power. Believe it or not, the Rambo class is the most challenging with regard to initial survival because, even though he starts the game with a Lance of Death — a weapon that kills any non-demon on a hit — he has but one hit point. A final note to those familiar with *Larn*: the goal and feel of the game are much the same, but the required strategy is not.

Knowing where to get these public domain games is either a simple task or a nearly impossible one. If one has access to a modem, these games can be found on virtually any moderate-sized network. If a player has access to Internet/Usenet, it is possible to get both the games and their source code — check the appropriate Usenet newsgroup for the current list of archive sites. **CGW**

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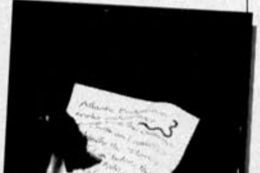


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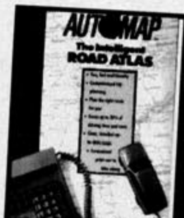
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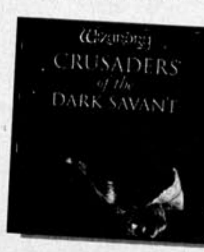
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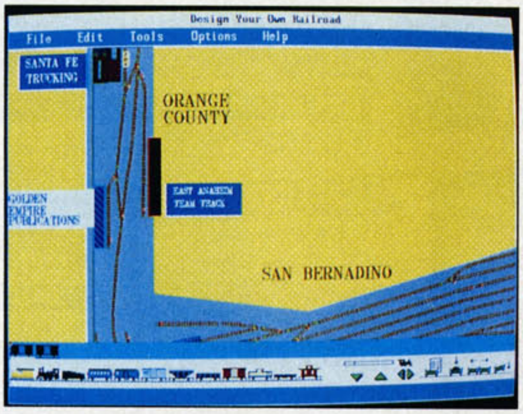


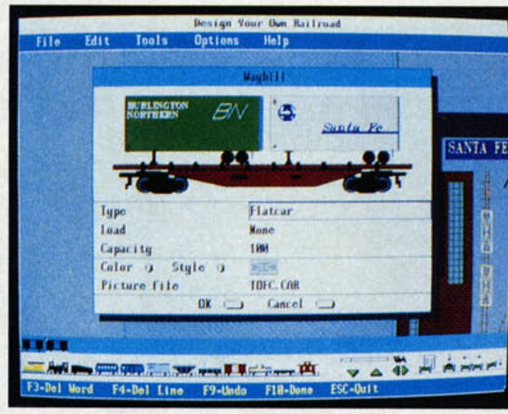
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I've Been Workin' on the Railroad

by Russell Sipe

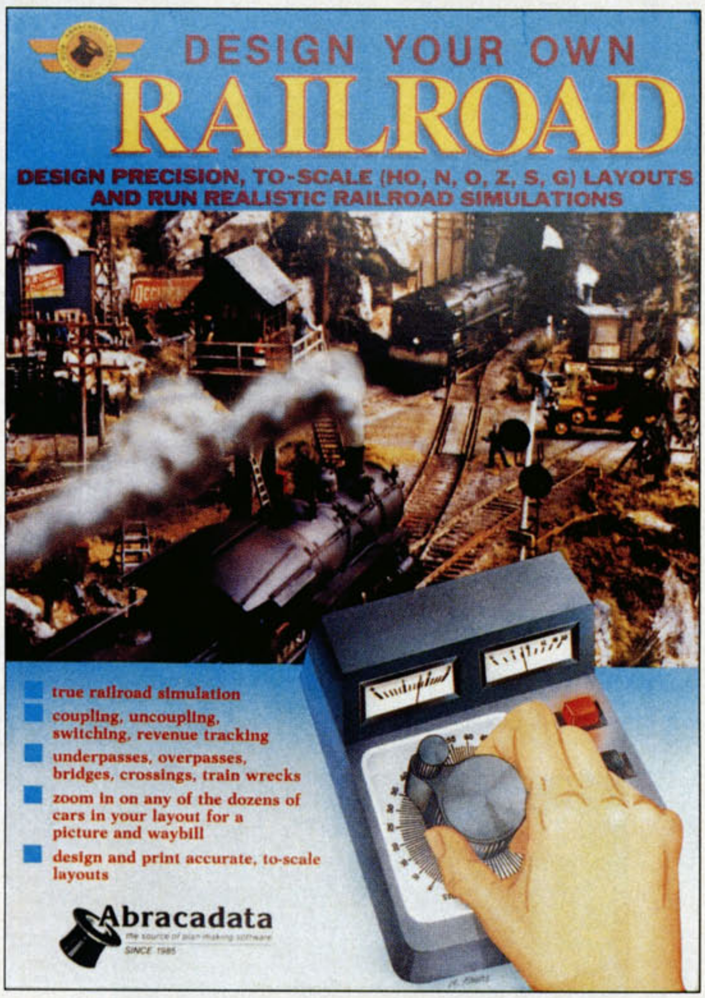




TITLE:	Design Your Own Railroad
SYSTEM:	IBM, Apple II
REVIEWED:	IBM
PRICE:	$59.95
DEVELOPER:	Jim Dill
PUBLISHER:	Abracadata Eugene, OR

Hobbyists are curious creatures. Would you spend hundreds of hard-earned dollars buying a 3-cent stamp? A stamp collector would. Would you willingly subject your body to freezing temperatures hiking through slush and mud, muscles aching, with the promise at the end of the day of the freeze-dried food and the hard ground for a bed? A mountain climber would. Would you... well, you get the idea.

What is mundane (or even masochistic) to most people is magnificent to the hobbyist. Take trains and model railroading, for example. Most people get irritated when caught at a railroad crossing by a slow freight train. The rail fan revels in the experience. Most people think model railroaders a bit daft (as the British would say), for spending years and sometimes small fortunes building a miniature railroad. (By the way, never refer to a model railroader's layout as a train set, and *never* say it's *cute*!)



Working on the Railroad

Design Your Own Railroad (*DYORR*) is a product for the railroad hobbyist. *DYORR* is the latest in a series of railroad software products from **Abracadata**. Earlier titles (*Design Your Own Train* and *Run Your Own Railroad*) were sufficiently unimpressive to me that *DYORR* was received with less than eager anticipation. However, I was pleasantly surprised with what I saw. Developer Jim Dill (Dill Software) has produced a nifty little product that will interest all model railroaders and rail fans.

DYORR allows the rail fan to build the model railroad of his dreams. Nearly every model railroader dreams of the basement-sized layout that supports a full schedule of train activity with three to six trains operating at any given time. What we *don't* dream about is the years it takes to build the layout, the tedious hours of regular maintenance it takes to keep the layout running, not to mention the logistics and spousal problems of setting aside hundreds of square feet of living space to support the dream. *DYORR* wipes out these problems. Now, when the little voice says "If you build it, he will come," go for your dream. You always wanted to meet Casey, right?

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The track-drawing tools are a simple CAD drawing program that, while not as elegant as the typical PC CAD program, does give you all the tools you need to design your railroad as you see fit. Three-way switches, slip switches and crossovers are all possible. The only feature lacking in the version we saw was a turntable (although it is planned for a future version). I had no difficulty in reproducing my own Golden Empire Western N Gauge 11' by 11' railroad in DYORR.

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The elementary paint program allows you not only to create scenery but to draw your own engines, cars, and front view of depots. It took less than 20 minutes to take an empty flatcar and add trailers to make a TOFC (Trailer on Flat Car — see photo).

Bumpy Tracks (Problems)

Currently Abracadata is shipping Version 1.2 of *DYORR*. The main difference between 1.2 and earlier versions is the addition of screen scrolling. When following a train around a layout larger than the screen, you need to redraw the screen to keep the train visible. In older versions this requires several keystrokes and the use of the mouse to accomplish. Depending on how tightly you are zoomed into your layout, the train could pass through the next screen before you maneuvered to it. This can be frustrating, to say the least. Version 1.2 solves this problem to a large degree by allowing you to use the arrow and/or keypad to scroll to adjoining screens. We are told that version 2.0 will make this scrolling automatic. If you have version 1.0 or 1.1 of *DYORR*, Abracadata will upgrade you to 1.2 at no cost. Contact them at 503-342-3030.

The cars and engines appear as wire-framed images. Although solid objects would have been more pleasing to look at, the wire-frame cars are functional, and should not detract from operations.

Working with Dispatch (Operations)

Speaking of operations, *DYORR* allows you to set up a economic template on your railroad by giving you the ability to customize each industry/depot as to the types of cargo they accept/ship. Each type of load (e.g,. coal, milk, lumber, etc.) carries a cash value. Coupled with the economic elements, *DYORR* has a clock feature which allows you to run a schedule against the clock. Clock speed is set by the user. It is typical for model railroaders to use "fast clocks" (e.g. a 10:1 fast clock clicks off one hour every six minutes). *DYORR* lets you select your time compression. You can also modify and/or add load types to the program. (I added "Manufactured Goods" as a generic load that several of my industries ship.)

These features allow you to construct a railroad that can serve as a self-created game or puzzle generator. The key here is that you have to create your own game or puzzle. Outside of the small handful of sample railroads included in *DYORR*, it is up to the user to create his own operating environment. If you enjoy model railroading, you are probably predisposed to developing your own "gaming environment." If you are a gamer (but not a model railroader) be advised that *DYORR* is not like *Sid Meier's Railroad Tycoon*. The "game" in *DYORR* is not in the box, it is in your head. It's up to you to use *DYORR* to create a "game."

In summary, if you are a model railroader/rail fan you will find this product a very enjoyable extension of your chosen hobby (but be sure to get version 1.2 or later). Non-railroaders (even if they enjoyed *Railroad Tycoon*) will either find themselves drawn into the world of model railroading by *DYORR*, or find themselves bored stiff. As for me, I love it.

Dill Software is working on a Mac version of *Design Your Own Railroad.* Following the release of the Mac version, they plan to release *DYORR* Version 2.0 for the IBM. There may be a *Windows* version in the future. I hope so. **CGW**

Conversions Received



Battle Command **(Ocean) IBM**

Dragon's Lair: Escape from Singe's Castle **(ReadySoft) IBM**

4-D Boxing **(Electronic Arts) Amiga**

Fireteam 2200 **(Raw Entertainment) Amiga**

Harpoon Battleset 4 **(Three-Sixty) Macintosh**

King's Quest V **(Sierra) Macintosh**

Leisure Suit Larry 5 **(Sierra) Amiga**

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Life Can Be Murder!

U.S. Gold's Murder!

by David Wilson

Lightning flashes and thunder roars at the old English mansion. Suddenly, the stormy night is pierced by an ear-shattering (digitized) scream. The master detective quickly clicks the computer's mouse and moves beyond the title screen. Said gumshoe has already deduced that this is the path to the screen on which the body will be discovered. The game is, as another master detective once observed, afoot, and there are gruesome murders to be solved.

TITLE:	Murder!
SYSTEM:	Amiga
PRICE:	$44.95
PROTECTION:	Document Look-Up
DESIGNERS:	Grant Harrison and Jason Kingsley
PUBLISHER:	U.S. Gold San Jose, CA

Such an evening of sleuthing is readily available to gamers who discover *Murder!*, a new offering from **U.S. Gold** in which the player is challenged with a number of mysteries as though he or she was a master detective in the fictional realm of that English high society made famous by Virginia Sayers, Agatha Christie and the like. Players roam about one of a variety of houses, performing the sorts of actions one would expect to find in a parlor mystery (picking up clues and interviewing one's hosts, the household staff and guests).

Play begins from a screen fashioned after a newspaper. Players are able to alter the date, the name of the home they will investigate, the type of home (whether it is a house, mansion, estate, etc.), the difficulty level and even the appearance of their detective. Each alteration affects which mystery the player will have to solve and the manual indicates that players who customize the game will uncover over three million different cases to solve.

Once the case is chosen, players are able to move to the scene of the crime. The object of the game is to discover the murderer, weapon, motive, etc. as in the boardgame *Clue*, but much more "detecting" is available to the *Murder!* player than the options available to the classic boardgamer. Detectives can examine a multitude of objects, interview witnesses and suspects, and check for fingerprints.

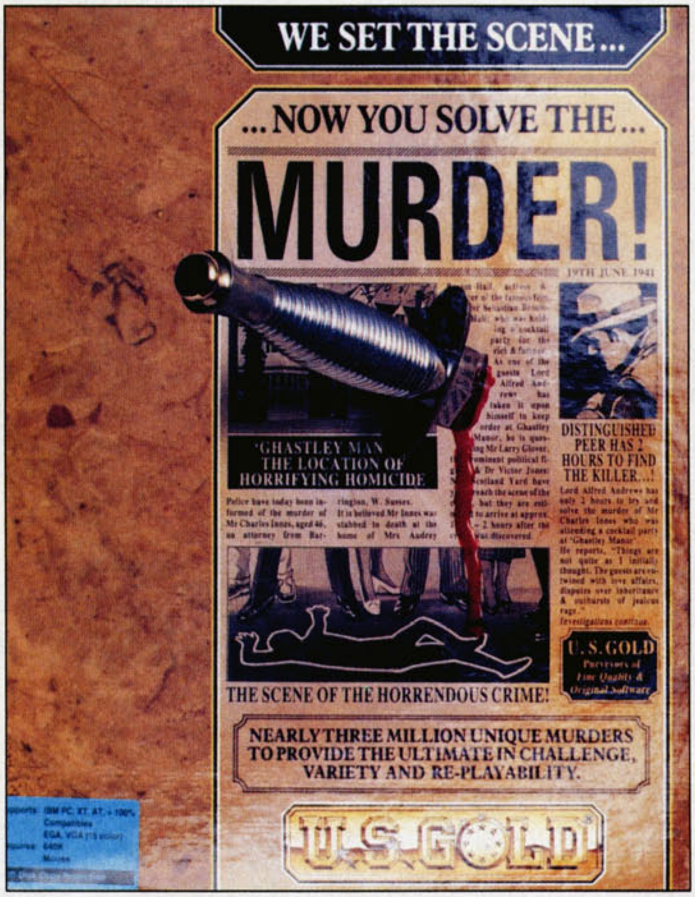
If I Might Ask

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the game is the interrogation interface. Witnesses can be interviewed about people, relationships between people, locations and objects. Obviously, a good detective learns to ask the right questions and there becomes a rhythm to the way an experienced player can "cut to the chase" in *Murder!*'s various scenarios. Since the game gives the player two hours of real time to solve each crime, players will want to sharpen their technique in order to guarantee that they can finish before the time deadline. Proper interrogation will go a long way toward solving a crime and keep the player from having to continuously click through the interview icons in a boring, tiresome fashion.

Naturally, when interrogation reveals a pertinent fact, a good detective makes notes. In *Murder!*, the interrogation menu allows for this option, but instead of the player having to use actual pencil and paper to keep track of the evidence, one need only click on the "note" icon and the facts will be recorded. Computer game historians will note that this is almost the same basic feature which was available on the **Accolade** mystery game of about five years ago, *Killed Until Dead*. Auto-notepads have been used somewhat since those days, but not nearly enough.

That's Not What I Heard

The game program offers a variety of sound effects that keep the game flowing gracefully. The grandfather clock ticks in the background of certain rooms. Night birds call in the outdoor areas. The clever and tactful use of these effects keep the player from going bonkers in the silence that exists during a period of intense problem-solving. The only sound which becomes annoying is the digitized whispering which occurs whenever people are conversing in the background or whenever the interrogation menu is summoned.



Ah, But I Have Evidence

No arrest can be made without first locating the murder weapon. Nevertheless, the present writer thought it something of a silly facet to this game that a proliferation of murder weapons seems to be lying all over the house, no matter which residence one visits. Guns, ropes, whips, skewers, logs, candlesticks, rolling pins and other artifacts which would be well at home in Scotland Yard's fabled "Black Museum" adorn nearly every nook and cranny of these grand old manses.

In the simpler levels, the murder weapon always seemed to have fingerprints on it and was easily established as the murder weapon. So, finding the weapon and getting prints from it is a very important step in the investigative process. Players will discover that getting the suspect to pick up another object so that prints can be obtained for comparison is tricky. This detective chased one suspect around the house for what seemed like hours in hopes that he would soon lay down an ashtray so that it would be possible to compare prints. When this weary gumshoe



finally tired of the chase, it turned out to be enough to simply accuse him. Perhaps the program counted the ashtray he had in his possession as being proper evidence.

At any rate, once the murder weapon and enough evidence is gathered, the detective may make an arrest. Actually, an arrest can be made at any time after finding the murder weapon, but a sleuth that arrests the wrong person, or has the wrong evidence, will be dishonored and humiliated. After losing a game at a point such as this, the player can simply click back into the same mystery (as long as he/she has not made any changes on the newspaper icon). Since the gamer will already have an idea where to search and who should be interviewed, it should be a snap to bring the case to a successful and less ignominious conclusion.

The manual is short, but well written. Four of its pages are devoted to gameplay, while the remaining thirteen pages detail case histories of some of the most gruesome and notorious murders ever committed. The case histories serve primarily to provide words for copy protection, but also assist the player in getting into the mood of the game.

And The Murderer Was...

Those who only have playing sessions that last less than an hour or so may resent the fact that there is no save game option. It is obvious why the designers left this option out. The game is fairly simple and should not really take an hour to complete.

This game might have some similarities to the boardgame *Clue*, but (as noted earlier) gamers should not be fooled by the similarity. The program is much more complex and sophisticated than that. Even so, the game is quickly learned and, after a short period of time, the mysteries easily solved. This crimesolver played all levels and discovered that the game is really not difficult at all for a half-way intuitive person. Game patterns are easily discerned, allowing nearly any mystery to be effortlessly solved after a half dozen games or so.

Elementary, My Dear Reader

Warning: *Readers who do not want gameplay simplified by specific hints should avoid this section.*

1. The best suspects are generally near the murder scene, often with the murder weapon in their hands. Focus the investigation on these individuals.

2. Play is less confusing in smaller houses because there are fewer rooms to search for clues.

3. Don't overlook "simple dislike" as a motive for murder. This seems to be as good a motive as any.

4. Don't be afraid to make an arrest. If the newspaper is not altered upon losing the game, the same mystery can be immediately replayed.

5. Once in awhile, if a player watches extremely closely, he will notice that, as the screen changes from the newspaper screen to the play screen, the identity of the true murderer and murder weapon will blink in a right hand corner of the play screen. This is a rare occurrence and, probably, just a program glitch. It happened twice for this detective (just when the weary pace of non-stop sleuthing was starting to set in). **CGW**

As the Worm Turns

ReadySoft's Dragon's Lair II: Escape from Singe's Castle

by Allen L. Greenberg



There is a moment in many great cartoons when the lead character turns to his audience and becomes human. It generally happens at the most implausible of times — the character has run several yards beyond the edge of a cliff, has looked down to discover his mistake and suddenly understands that gravity is several seconds overdue in fulfilling its function. Then again, the character may have reached blindly into a hole to retrieve some valuable object which disappeared inside mere seconds before, but instead, pulls out a lit firecracker. The character's animated eyes look to the viewer in despair and, for an instant, the poor creature seems almost to gain a soul. "Dirk the Daring," hero of the successful series of *Dragon's Lair* arcade games, is an animated, interactive-cartoon character who faces many such moments in the latest offering from **ReadySoft** — *Escape From Singe's Castle*.

Dirk was originally designed by one-time Disney animator Don Bluth, who is now best known for such features as *All Dogs Go to Heaven* and *An American Tail*. Dirk's adventures, in which Bluth's cinematic animations have replaced conventional computer graphics, are startling when seen for the first time. However, whatever shock the gamer experiences at first encountering Dirk is quickly mitigated by the discovery that his control over the hero is very limited. As in the other *Dragon's Lair* games, the screen shows Dirk resolutely striding along when he is interrupted by some life-threatening danger. The player must correctly choose one of the four cardinal directions towards which the hero must leap or have him draw his sword and attack. Should the player make the wrong



TITLE:	Dragon's Lair: Escape from Singe's Castle
SYSTEMS:	Apple IIGS, Atari ST IBM with 640K
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	Non-Repro Look-Up
PUBLISHER:	ReadySoft Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada

choice, or even the proper choice at the wrong instant, the display switches to an animation depicting the hero's death.

One of the most common complaints with the series is that these death sequences fail to give the player any idea how close his move was to the proper one or what button might reward him with Dirk's survival on the next attempt. Not quite a test of reflexes and, certainly, not a group of puzzles to be solved, the *Dragon's Lair* games can only be completed after a long series of trial and error. To many, this seems little more than a Pavlovian device intended to train players in pushing buttons. However, the various interactive-cartoon games have earned a following of players in the coin-op arcades as well as on all types of game machines and personal computers. For them, *Escape* will provide a generous serving of MOTS (More of the Same).

Having saved the ample-breasted Princess Daphne from the dragon Singe in a previous game, Dirk the Daring now discovers that she yet remains a captive, this time of the Shapeshifter. Fifteen different scenes, which feature some two dozen new ways for Dirk to die, separate him from his beloved — at least until the next sequel. Highlights of this adventure include: a flying horse with no sense of direction; the Lizard King, whose treasure turns out to be unexpectedly loyal to its master and a mirror with a *very* nasty reflection. The game ends once Dirk uses up three lives or the princess is rescued.

Escape is an easier game to complete than the original *Dragon's Lair*, although slightly less spectacular. Rather than dodging eight-foot cue-balls or navigating hostile rivers, Dirk simply skips out of the way of most dangers and draws his sword in defiance of others. Completing the game is also made easier by the ability to save a game in progress on disk.

Graphically, the program contains the silky-smooth cartoon animation which has distinguished the *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* series of games. Only an easily-forgivable roughness around the edges mars the illusion that the action presented is hand-drawn rather than digitized. On the IBM, *Dragon's Lair II* supports VGA, EGA, CGA and Tandy graphics. Sound-Blaster, AdLib, Tandy 1000 sound as well as Pro Audio Spectrum are also supported.

None of the images presented here could hope to compete with the masterful graphics which have appeared lately in several adventure and role-playing games, yet the quirkiness of Don Bluth's creations have an engaging quality not found elsewhere in computer entertainment. Dirk the Daring is really a likeable lantern-jawed idiot, with whom one can easily sympathize for falling in love with the empty-headed Daphne, who follows him like a five-year-old fixed on her favorite Ninja Turtle.

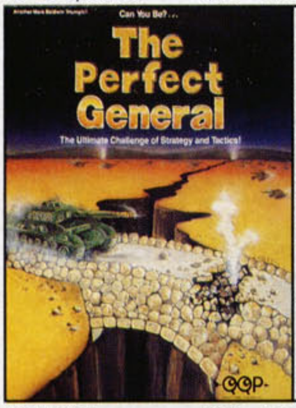
It is still to be considered an impressive achievement that **ReadySoft** has been able to transfer movie-style animation from the original laser-disc game to digitized media. Equally noteworthy is how quickly the animations load from the disk into computer memory. Disappointingly, the audio track which accompanies the program is far less impressive — the sound of weapons clashing, mixed with the hero's grunts, are more annoying than entertaining, while the fanfare that repeats each time Dirk moves on to a new part of the castle might easily have been set aside.

Dragon's Lair II: Escape From Singe's Castle is an odd creature, an exceptional program which suffers from uninteresting game-play. Rather than continue to produce more products which resemble each other to the extent that the sequel resembles the original, perhaps it is time for **ReadySoft** to increase the value of their software by adding some "real" games to their great cartoons. With CD-ROM ready to become part of mainstream computer media, the gaming community can only welcome programs which are able to use it well.

It is unfortunate that Dirk never turns to look at his audience before he dies. Not once does he use his animated charm to exhort a player to try just a bit harder to save him from yet another gut-rending fate. Perhaps that is why his followers never seem to tire of watching him die. **CGW**

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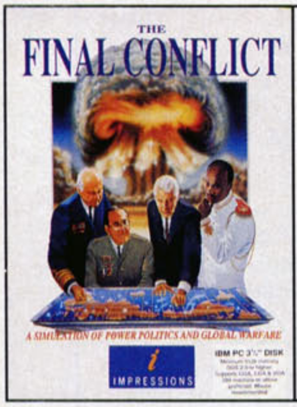
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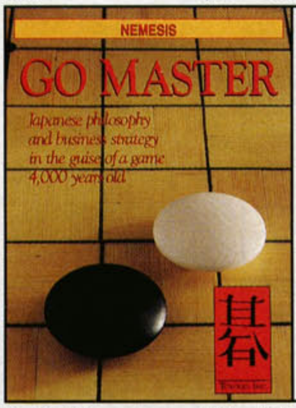
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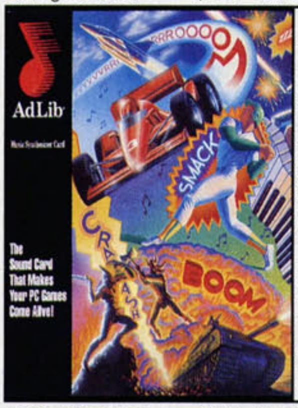
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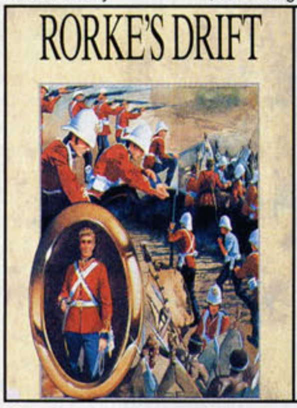
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'RORKE'S DRIFT' from **IMPRESSIONS** is a detailed simulation of the battle between 137 British soldiers & 4000 Zulu warriors that took place Jan 22 1879. You command the British in their attempt to hold out against the onslaught. You control each man, standing, sitting, prone, aiming, firing, reloading, running or walking. With 3D map, animated combat & movement mouse support & 256 color VGA. **$34**

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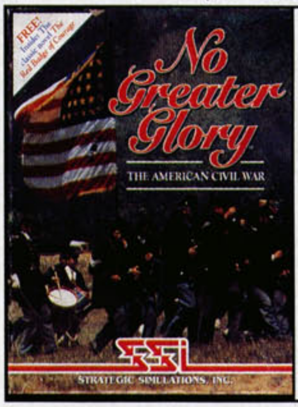
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'CIVIL WAR: NO GREATER GLORY' from **SSI** is a military, economic, political simulation of the American Civil War. Determine the issues of slavery, taxes, inflation, & negro enlistment. Play either side, Abraham Lincoln & the North or Jefferson Davis & the South. Pick your cabinet members & foreign envoys. Move your armies into position & order your generals to take them to battle. **$42**

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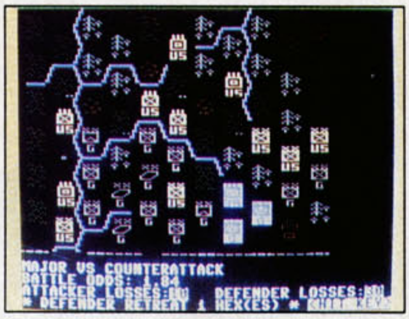
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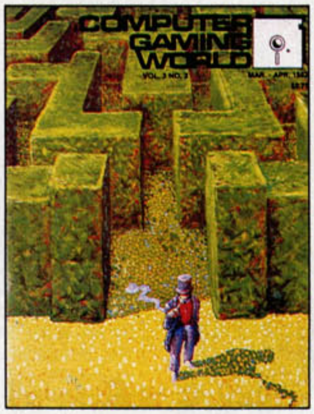
Computer gaming in days gone by

They write songs about them. They publish books about them. Movies and television exploit them. What are they? Memories! "Memories..."; "Do You Remember..."; "Try to Remember, the Kind of September..."; "Thanks for the Memories..."

Computer Gaming World *has the unique perspective of being able to document more than ten years of memories in its pages. "Once Upon a Time" is our new column that will look back at computer gaming both ten and five years ago. Through* CGW*'s pages we will be "taking a peek" [term first used in the Nov.-Dec. 1982 issue of* CGW*] at the history of the fascinating and rapidly changing hobby which we all love.*

So, fair reader, peruse and learn of days gone by. Once upon a time...









Clockwise from top left: Tigers in the Snow; April 1982 issue cover; Starflight; April 1987 issue cover

Ten Years Ago

News: On March 10, President Ronald Reagan announced economic sanctions against Libya as a protest against its involvement in international terrorism.

Arts and Entertainment: *Chariots of Fire* wins the Oscar for Best Picture. • Top box office hit of the year will turn out to be *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial.* • Tracy Kidder wins a Pulitzer prize for her book *The Soul of a New Machine.*

Computer Gaming World: In *CGW* 2.2 (Mar-Apr 1982) SSI's *Southern Command, Tigers In The Snow* and *Napoleon's Campaign's 1813-1815* were covered. There was a short fictional piece based on Muse's *Castle Wolfenstein*. The "big" technological breakthrough in *Wolfenstein* was speech! We were all entranced when *Wolfenstein* made the little Apple II speaker bark out *"Halt!"* and *"Schwein!"* (At least that's what it *sounded* like.)

A letter from Joel Billings of **SSI** ran in *CGW* 2.2 in which he took Chris Crawford to task over Crawford's article in *CGW* 1.1, "The Future of Computer Wargaming". In that article Crawford made the statement that "even a 16K system with cassette only has enough throughput to handle a good wargame" (remember, this is early 1982). Billings contended in 2.2 that "with only 16K a designer must constantly simplify his game, taking away options until the game generally follows the same course every time it is played.... On the other hand, a 48K game can allow for different scenarios, more random events, and most importantly, more rules which cause each game to be considerably different from the last one played". Boy, have times changed!

Steve Rasnic Tem sounded downright prophetic in his article entitled "The Current State of Computer Game Documentation" when he stated that, "I believe that in the future computer game manuals will ultimately be part of a multi-media approach including software, book, playing map and other artifacts — a packaged fantasy world". Although this approach existed to a limited degree in 1982, it was nothing like it is today. Some other games covered were **Muse**'s *Robotwar* (magazine-run tournament results); **SubLogic**'s *A2-FS1 Flight Simulator* (Tips); and *David's Midnight Magic* (review).

Five Years Ago

Events: The "Rev." Jim Bakker resigned his ministry, admitting that he had had an affair with his church secretary, Jessica Hahn, seven years before. • AZT is approved by the FDA for treatment of AIDS patients. • *Platoon* wins the Oscar for best picture. • Best Actor award goes to Paul Newman in *The Color of Money*. • Best Actress is Marlee Matlin for her role in *Children of a Lesser God.*

Computer Gaming World: The March 1987 (#35) issue contained our coverage of the Winter Consumer Electronics Show. In the "Can You Believe That?" department was the announcement from both **Atari** and **Commodore** that they were going to release MS-DOS computers. Atari announced the **Atari PC** ($499-$699 retail, 8088 processor). They also announce plans to develop "an AT workalike using the 286 processor and one using the new 386." Commodore announced the PC10-1 and PC10-2. Both were to be 8088-based computers.

A major theme in the computer game marketplace in 1987 was *budget software*. The major software players instituted budget lines. These games were a mixture of older U.S. games ("classics") and imports (typically British arcade games). This marked the beginning of the "British Invasion", computer game style. Playing off of **Electronic Arts**' successful marketing quip "Simple, hot and deep", Bing Gordon of EA referred to their budget lines ("Software Classics" and "Amazing") as "Simple, hot and cheap".

Some of the games covered in the issue were: **Microprose**'s *Gunship*; **SSI**'s *Gemstone Healer* and *Fifty Mission Crush*; **Electronic Arts**' *Starflight* and *Patton Versus Rommel*; **Final Frontier**'s *Space M+A+X*; and **Simon & Schuster**'s *Star Trek: The Promethean Prophecy* (yes, they used to do software!). The top-rated strategy game in the *CGW Poll* (until recently called "Reader Input Device") was **SSI**'s *Kampfgruppe* (now in *CGW*'s Hall of Fame). The top-rated Adventure game was another Hall of Fame member, *Ultima IV* from **Origin Systems**.

[Ed. Note: Since *CGW* was not a monthly magazine in days gone by, this column will appear *every other* month, rather than monthly.] **CGW**

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From the Cockpit

Add-On Peripherals for Flight Simulators: Does New Hardware Equal New Levels of Experience?

by Timothy Trimble



With the technological advancements in microcomputers and flight simulation software, it would only seem reasonable that "third-party" products supporting flight simulators would also become more sophisticated. A few products that are helping to do this are the *Flightmaster* yoke and pedals, *MaxxTwo* yoke, *MaxxPedals*, *Thrustmaster* and the *Thrustmaster* joystick.

Flightmaster Products

The *Flightmaster* yoke and pedals, from the **Flightmaster** company in Texas, is a good attempt at supporting the true look and feel of a Cessna 182 airplane. The yoke has the same dimensions as the yoke in a Cessna 182 and includes a throttle lever and a trim knob. The *Flightmaster* is also designed with the computer armchair pilot in mind, since the case is built for supporting a computer keyboard. One push button is installed on the left handle of the yoke and acts the same as the fire button on a joystick. The yoke has a cable, which is four feet long, that plugs into the joystick port of the computer.

The rudder pedals give a very realistic feel of the rudder movement that is normally found in a real aircraft, although the spacing between the pedals is quite a bit closer than what can be found in an actual Cessna 182. Centering of the pedals can sometimes be difficult, but the smoothness of the rudder movement helps in making those crosswind approaches. Switches are installed at the top of the rudder pedals for toe brakes. A cable from the rudder pedals uses a special connector that plugs into the case of the yoke.

A nice addition to the Flightmaster system is a diskette with flight modes for all of the *Microsoft Flight Simulator* aircraft. The disk provides, then, the appropriate system settings for using the Flightmaster yoke and rudder pedals.

Overall, the Flightmaster is a good attempt at realistic flight controls for both *Microsoft Flight Simulator* and **Sublogic**'s *ATP*. The yoke has a bit of a "flimsy" feel to it and prevents tired armchair pilots from resting their hands on the handles, but works quite well at controlling the aircraft. The rudder pedals are the best part of the *Flightmaster* system and provide an interesting sense of realism for those who try the hardware.

MaxxTwo and MaxxPedals

The **Maxximum Company** has had a little more experience with making yoke products for flight simulators. The *MaxxTwo* yoke is a re-engineered version of the first Maxx yoke product and it addresses the requests of a lot of armchair pilots for a more sturdy feel. The *MaxxTwo* yoke has a clamp that attaches to the lip of a desk (or table) with two adjustable knobs. There are pushbuttons on both handles of the yoke which function as the normal joystick one and two pushbuttons, and a sliding throttle control is mounted directly under the yoke. The yoke has a good solid feel to it and centers itself fairly well. Resistance can be felt with forward and back pressure on the yoke and this provides the realism of air flow pressure against the control surfaces of the simulated aircraft.

The *MaxxPedals* also appear to be well constructed and durable for a lot of use. They come with a long cable and a Y-adapter for a joystick connection, which allows the use of the *MaxxPedals* with any other type of joystick control device. The pedals resemble two automobile gas pedals with a spacing of about two inches between them. Although the pedals have a good solid feel and respond quite well for rudder control, they do not provide the same feel of the standard rudder control of an aircraft, since they require down pressure instead of a horizontal push with the feet.

Aside from the unrealistic feel, the pedals work very well with *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. The centering is very accurate when pressure is released from one side or the other and the brakes can be applied by pressing down on both of the pedals at the same time.

Thrustmaster Products

Although the **Thrustmaster** products are not directly designed for use with *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, they do represent the best attempt yet at providing a realistic feel for flight control. The *Mark I Weapons Control System* (*WCS*) and the *Flight Control System* (*FCS*) are, together, the best way to pump perspiration into the palms of any armchair combat pilot.

The *WCS* is a push/pull throttle control, similar to the throttle/weapon control found in jet fighters, with six pushbutton switches and one three-way toggle switch, all within easy reach of the fingers. Mainly designed for use with products such as *Falcon 3.0* (from **Spectrum HoloByte**) and other combat flight simulators, the *WCS* provides throttle (and afterburner) and weapons control. For example, with *Falcon 3.0*, the *WCS* switches can control flare and chaff release, target selection, target lock, air brakes and clearing of target lock, without requiring the armchair pilot to touch the computer keyboard. Since these are functions that are normally handled through various keystrokes on the computer keyboard, the *WCS* replaces those keystrokes with the switches and an internal ROM (Read Only Memory) chip. The *WCS* plugs into the keyboard plug on the computer and the keyboard then plugs into the back of the *WCS*. The system has a very sturdy plastic base that is large enough to prevent slippage on the desktop while in the heat of battle.

The *FCS* provides what would normally be handled by a joystick, but with a lot of extras. First of all, the *FCS* does not

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resemble a standard joystick but, rather, the flightstick of a combat fighter, complete with contoured grip and switches/controls in the appropriate places. With *Falcon 3.0*, the *FCS* is able to control weapon selection, weapon firing, airbrakes, weapon type selection (air-to-air or air-to-ground weapons) and the left/right up/down movement of the flight stick.

The *FCS* itself looks like it could survive a direct bomb hit. The base of the unit is made of metal and the grip is molded around a metal stem. Resistance pressure can be felt when moving the stick, providing a realistic feel. The stick is not perfect at self-centering but most armchair pilots will find that they can learn to manually center the stick, which becomes a subconscious effort after one becomes used to the control and feel of the *FCS*. Together, the *Weapon Control System* and the *Flight Control System* represent the most satisfying hardware interface yet for armchair combat pilots.

Gravis Mouse Stick

With the recent release of the new version of *Microsoft Flight Simulator* for the **Macintosh**, the average armchair pilot is reminded of the pain that is endured while trying to fly a simulated aircraft with a mouse. To resolve this situation, **Gravis** has just released the *MouseStick*. The *MouseStick* is a combination of the **Gravis** *SuperMouse Controller* (a joystick by any other name) and a new device called the **Gravis** *MouseStick Processing Unit* (*GMPU*). The *GMPU* allows both the *MouseStick* controller and a standard mouse device to be connected to the Macintosh at the same time. The *MouseStick* controller is very similar to the standard **Gravis** joystick for IBM compatibles, aside from the special connector for the GMPU. With the GMPU, the *MouseStick* can also be used in place of the standard mouse.

The feel and control of the *MouseStick* with *Microsoft Flight Simulator* is a great improvement over using the mouse. The *MouseStick* does a great job of self-centering and the resistance pressure can be adjusted to the preference of the armchair pilot. Two standard joystick buttons plus a button on the grip are provided and can be configured by the user for either button one or button two control. At last! A decent controller for the Macintosh.

Summary

Finally, some great add-on products are being offered for the growing multitude of armchair pilots. Even though the products for *Microsoft Flight Simulator* are a good start, there is still room for improvement. A combination of the **Maxximum** yoke with the **Flight Master** rudder pedals would be effective but the custom connection on the pedals prevents this from working.

As the flight simulations marketplace continues to evolve, the armchair pilot can be guaranteed that there will be more great products yet to come.

So, once again, strapping on my flight suit, plugging in the twelve-inch bass speakers into the *Soundblaster* (speaker under the seat of course), gripping the flight controller and shoving the throttle to the wall, this is Timothy Trimble, From the Cockpit, heading into the wild blue yonder! **cgw**

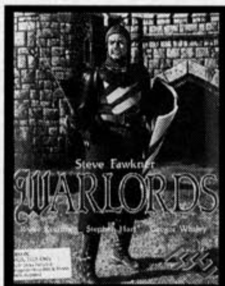
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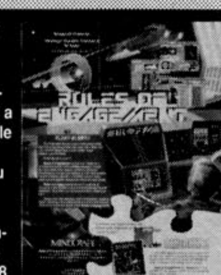


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From the Front

Our "Bit" for the War Effort

by Alan Emrich

With the 50th anniversary of World War II still in full swing, we can thank not only our parents or grandparents for making the world safe for democracy, but also for giving us so many good wargames to play. Reader response to *Computer Wargaming World* and its magazine-within-the-magazine look and feel has been highly favorable. Computer wargamers are finding their media niche here among these pages, even as computer wargame coverage in traditional board wargame magazines continues to rate poorly among their readers.

Welcome home!

We will be using this column to keep our readers up to date on the latest computer wargaming news, trends and (dare we say it?) *rumors*. While this is all fairly well covered in our Consumer Electronics Show coverage in this issue and the next, watch this column in the future for "wargame specific" insider information.

Games Sans Brains

Recently, *Computer Gaming World* ran an editorial article on PRODIGY. It concerned a trend we see beginning to emerge in computer wargames and was inspired by a piece of software that was brought into our office to preview. The software was based on the board wargame *EastFront* by **Columbia Games** of Canada. This outstanding "wooden block"-style boardgame released last summer at the *Origins* game convention was put into a software format as almost a direct translation of the boardgame, allowing for multi-system standardized save-game file transfers (i.e., ASCII save-game files), modem and direct serial connect play, plus two players at the same computer or one player manually playing both sides. Thus, for wargamers who have an opponent, "*Computer East-Front*" (for lack of an official title) is a complete, ready to play computer wargame with one minor exception...

No artificial intelligence (AI).

The meager bit of artificial intelligence which was included in the program largely concerned itself with the computer making all the die rolls and making sure that the game rules were not violated. Other than that, it was the boardgame put up on a computer monitor, with all the ease of storage that presents.

Columbia Games is considering marketing this software "as is," without the AI, as a low-cost (under $20?) "connectivity" product. In other words, players who already enjoy the boardgame *EastFront* and have a computer can now widen their opponent base through electronic connectivity, and computer wargamers who are already connected to each other through the networks and BBSs will have a new title to play in *Computer EastFront*. With a low production run and (probably) direct mail-order only sales (to keep packaging and distribution costs down), only a niche market like wargamers could support such a new endeavor.

But will they?

Vox PRODIGY, Vox Dei

When asked of wargamers on the PRODIGY network (Jump: COMPUTERGAMES, in the Other Games topic on the bulletin boards where we can be reached at EXPT40B), the response was effusive. Here are a few of the comments we received:

"Three cheers for the new trend in gaming! ...the AI in most of the wargames around is anything but intelligent." —Bowden Russell

"...nowadays everyone expects AI in sims, but which of them have really good AI? We've all seen the myriad [of] wargames come out with AI that can be easily beaten, but there have been few games that actually encourage two-player gaming." —David Grosskurth

"I don't agree that a 3' x 6' map is essential; it's fun, but a well-designed VGA computer presentation works very well (take *Harpoon*, *Railroad Tycoon* and *Civilization* as examples of alternate approaches). Vacuum cleaners, cats and kids could all fit [in the same place and time as a wargame].

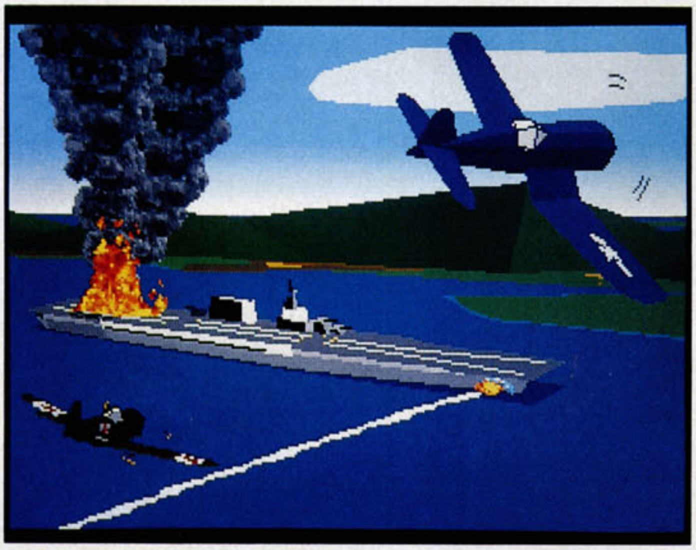
"If this idea of games without AI were taken seriously, I think we could expand the overall market. I do think that work on improving AI is more important, but it seems to me that we certainly need both." —Edwin "Rip" Smith

Please, use the CGW Poll card in this issue to hand write your opinions on the subject of games without artificial intelligence. Is it an idea destined for a place in the sun, or waste of programming time and effort? CGW


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CELESTE 1 44
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Corsairs and Crosshairs,

Damon Slye's Aces of the





Pearl Harbor, Black Sheep Squadron, Jimmy Doolittle's raid on Tokyo, "Tokyo Express" and "The Slot" are all familiar names that lend a sense of atmosphere to the United States' communal memories of World War II action in the Pacific Theater. The image of aviator as aerial gladiator, dueling with his "samurai" opponent over the vast expanse of the Pacific, is indelible in the annals of heroism. The freedom to soar above the bloody carnage of jungle ambushes and beach landings and to exercise the capacity of taking one's life in one's hands and coming "face to face" with the enemy forms the raw materials from which legends are forged.

Damon Slye (designer of *Stellar 7* and *Red Baron*) has developed a simulation in which gamers can forge their own legends. From the opening credits, in which a beautifully rendered Corsair slices across the computer screen, chased by a menacing Zero, *Aces of the Pacific* should accomplish for would-be "Pappy" Boyingtons what *Red Baron* did for would-be Browns and Richtofens. Where *Red Baron* pilots could enlist in the aerial corps of either side and participate in World War I missions, *Aces of the Pacific* allows "pilots" to enlist in one of three U.S. forces (Navy, Air Force or Marines) or one of two Japanese forces (Navy or Air Force). Where *Red Baron* featured daylight missions (as one would expect for a WWI simulation), *Aces of the Pacific* adds night engagements. Also, where the former sent pilots over the trenches for air-to-air and air-to-ground combat, the latter sends pilots against *both* carrier and land-based targets, as well as into air-to-air dogfights.

Technologically Speaking

Naturally, the simple addition of night missions and the carrier-launched versus airstrip-launched missions caused **Dynamix** to upgrade their technology. Adding night missions was a necessity, since most of the famed "Tokyo Express" provisioning that took place in the South Pacific occurred at night. Designing for night missions meant more than changing the color palette and reducing the range of a pilot's vision, however. The design team took seriously the placement of constellations and the phases of the moon. Since the campaign mode uses a calendar to monitor the progress of the player's forces, the design team elected to connect that information to a star calendar. The star calendar insures proper phases of the moon (a very impressive effect) and correct placement of constellations.

Having carriers as targets also serves to allow another special effect. As the planes come in to strafe the targets, there is a marvelous splash effect when the bullets hit the water. Such touches abound throughout *Aces of the Pacific*. Taking off from a carrier deck in *Aces of the Pacific* seems considerably different to computer pilots than being launched from the decks of carriers in modern simulations. Players will have to watch their angles of attack when taking off or they may find themselves "in the drink." Most of us are "spoiled" by the excess of power available to modern jet fighters and have not really faced the almost underpowered feel of vintage aircraft in previous World War II simulations.

Profiles in Fuselage

The graphic appearance of *Red Baron* was one of the first items of comment for many gamers. *Aces of the Pacific* should be no exception. The design team continues to refine the idea of terraced shading over the tops of polygons, but the effect is even more impressive. Since the use of terraced technology slows down the frame rate (from its circa eight frames per second, equivalent to the six-to-eight frames per second in *Red Baron*), the real details are to be found in side views (the wings are *very* well executed) and outside the plane (chase) views where speed is not important to the suspension of disbelief. So, whereas the game is primarily a polygon-filled simulation experience, there are satisfying bits of chrome in the terraced details which overlay the polygons in places where such technology does not reduce the performance of the flight model itself.

Yet the design team has accomplished

Heroes and Zeros

Pacific *from Dynamix*



more than this. They have created polygon-filled palm trees that do a considerable amount to "dress up" the Pacific islands being simulated. Although the buildings and bunkers (at least, in the early alpha we were looking at) are clearly polygon-filled "targets" (at some angles dissipating into two-dimensional facades as the player's plane flies by), they are, nevertheless, state-of-the-art polygon-filled targets. The carriers themselves feature sufficient overlay that they assist in helping computer pilots suspend their disbelief.

The role-playing interface is, essentially, that of *Red Baron* except that the art deco look which was reminiscent of the early twentieth century has given way to the cold gray steel of the mid-twentieth century. Again, digitized photographs adorn many of the screens that narrate mission assignments, results and evaluations. In addition, the theater (strategic) map in *Aces of the Pacific* is extremely impressive. Not only are the topographical maps of various continents and islands impressively detailed, but the map scrolls smoothly with pop-up captions of military significance and names of geographical locations.

The Sound of the Fury

While no one complained about sound support in *Red Baron*, there is a new feature in *Aces of the Pacific* (at least, it will be noticed by more people) which did not get noticed in *Red Baron*. There is a Doppler effect that really gives the impression of enemy planes going past and moving on. *CGW*'s editorial staff was also impressed with all of the sound effects associated with engine performance. As usual, **Dynamix**, like its parent company, **Sierra**, is attempting (successfully) to create a total entertainment package which impacts the computer gamer on many levels.

On the Fly (Game Play)

Game play functions in much the same way as it did in *Red Baron*. Players can fly single missions which run the gamut from historical missions and fights against great aces from history to generic fighter sweeps and combat air patrols that put player pilots right in the thick of the action.

In campaign/career mode, the player enlists in a service and is given a potential point at which to begin his campaign. For example, a new Japanese pilot might be offered service in support of the invasion of the Philippines or an American pilot might be thrust into the fray immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Once the player's "career" has begun, individual missions are assigned and resolved (with debriefings and medal award ceremonies) as they were in *Red Baron*.

In Memory of the Valiant Dead

Aces of the Pacific is a tremendously advanced flight simulator that advances the state of the art for both the *Great War Planes Series* and the industry as a whole. Even in this early look, it is obvious that Damon Slye's team has refused to rest on their laurels (medals?) from winning *CGW*'s Simulation of the Year for *Red Baron* and intends to be a leading contender in that category from now on. **CGW**



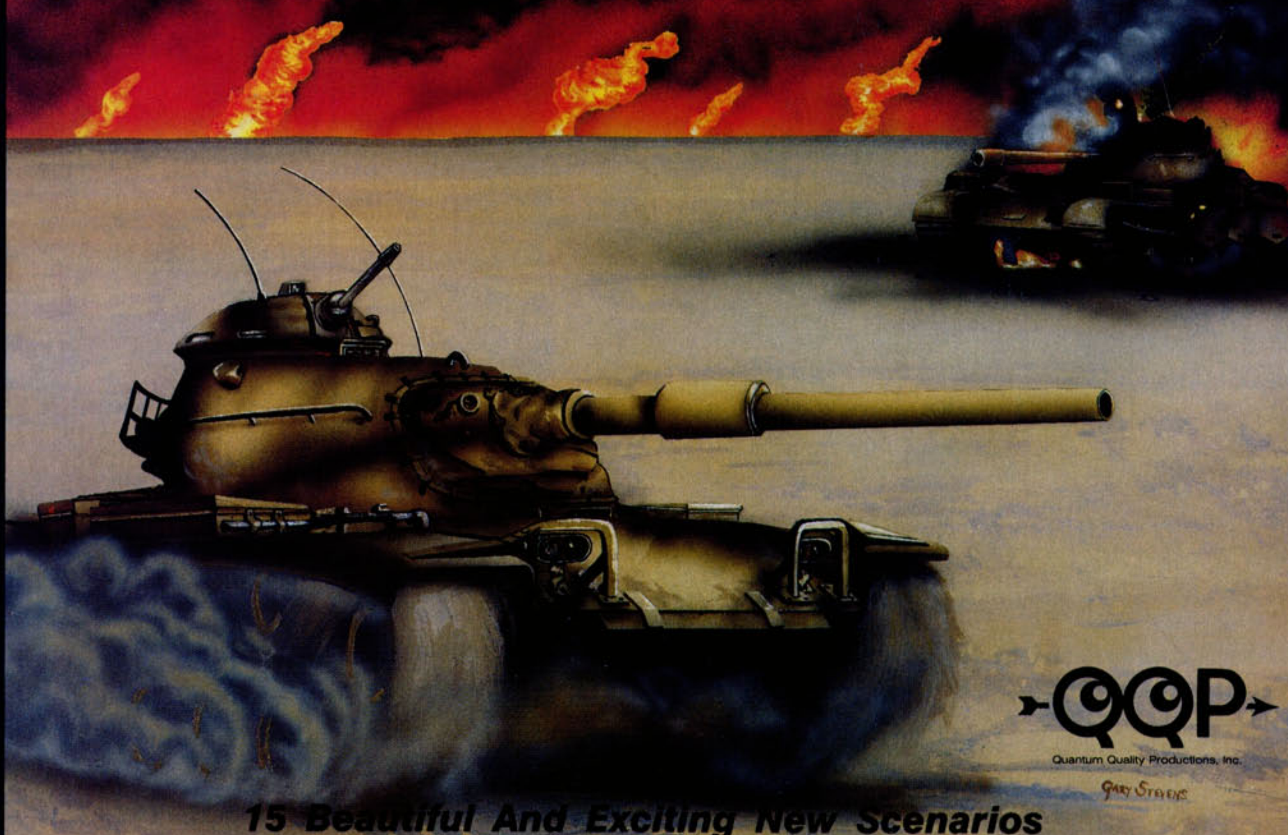
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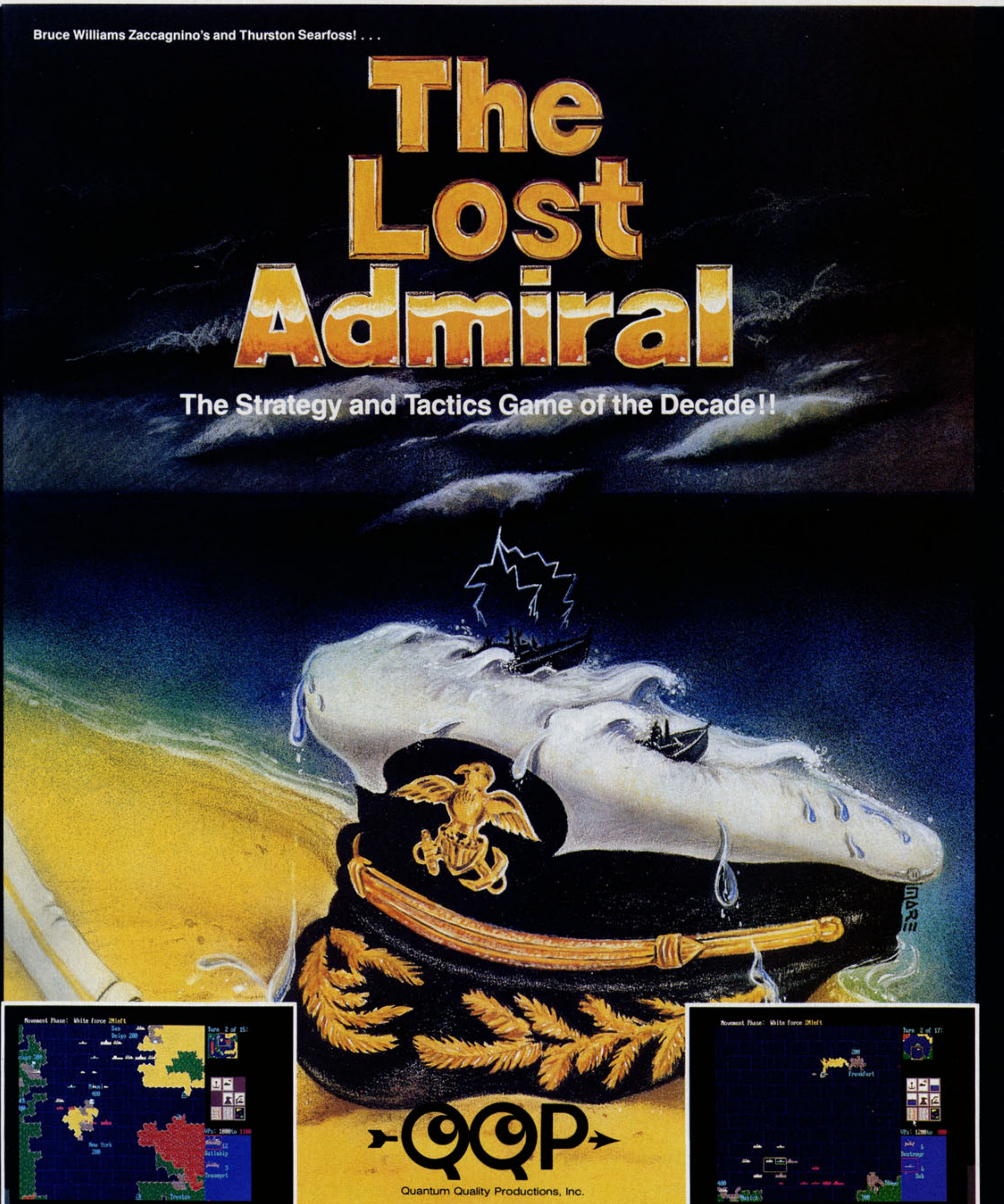


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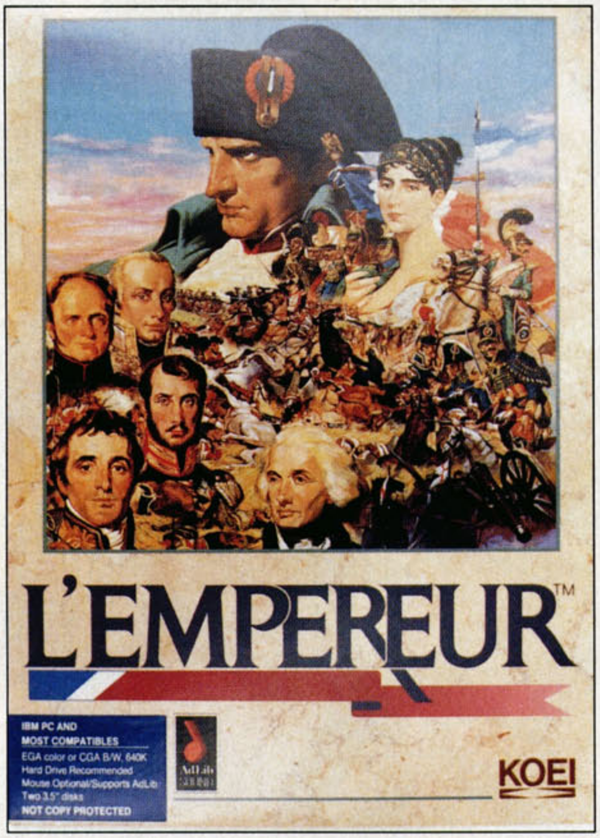
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A Bullet Not Yet Cast

Koei's L'Empereur

by M. Evan Brooks

TITLE:	L'Empereur
SYSTEM:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	0-1
PRICE:	$59.95
PROTECTION:	None
DESIGNER:	Koei Staff
PUBLISHER:	Koei Corporation Burlingame, CA



In *L'Empereur*, the player's economic, political and military decisions will determine whether the bullet has actually been cast (to paraphrase Bonaparte himself) that will kill the great French general. *L'Empereur* is **Koei**'s first computer simulation covering a Western scenario — the breadth of the Napoleonic Campaigns. Having previously covered the East (e.g. *Nobunaga's Ambition*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Genghis Khan*), **Koei** has now turned to the *grognard*'s delight.

Using a similar system and format to its previous releases, **Koei**'s *L'Empereur* allows one to begin in four periods of Napoleon's life: as a general (1796), as a commander-in-chief (1798), as First Consul (1802), or as Emperor (1806). As each scenario is successfully completed, the simulation automatically continues to the next in order.

A Thousand Bayonets (Documentation)

The documentation is professionally produced. Actually, one could stop there — the problem with the documentation is that it covers the plethora of commands which may be utilized, but does not bring them together into a cohesive *gestalt*. Thus, it is left to the player to experiment with the command structures, determine what is most effective, and employ the best means to achieve European hegemony. However, many of the commands have a "masked" effect, i.e. their full impact is not immediate, and the player will not be able to understand what he is or should be doing.

The political and economic interface simply is an unknown entity. While intensive play will reveal many facets to the user, there is simply too much confusion in the initial play. Interestingly enough, *L'Empereur* is being released in a game cartridge format and *that* documentation includes a tutorial — an omission sadly missing in the disk version. The cartridge scenario begins with Napoleon in charge of the government, however, and allows more latitude and opportunity for experimentation than most of the computer game's scenarios. As a lowly general, the player must act quickly and effectively while, in game terms, having little idea of how to do either.

Insofar as historical background is concerned, the documentation is sufficient for a novice. However, the complexity of the game is more likely to appeal to the intermediate and advanced gamer. Some interesting editorial comments have been made, and these are fascinating because they show a different perspective than one would generally find in the works of occidental historians. For example, in describing Napoleon, the introduction states that "Some people still tremble at the memory of his passionate yet dreadful deeds." Dreadful deeds? In terms of would-be global conquerors, Napoleon's deeds appear much tamer than those of Genghis Khan, Adolf Hitler or the like and the French conquests did bring about the dissemination of the Napoleonic Code, as well as the ideals of the French Revolution and nationalism to Europe.

There are also some historical errors and omissions: in discussing the Egyptian Campaign, the manual notes that "Napoleon turned his troops back when the time was right;" actually, he abandoned his army and returned to Paris. Similarly, in describing Marshal Massena, the manual notes that "he lost the power to lead his troops." This reviewer supposes that is true to a limited degree, but what is more historically accurate is that the Marshal was a world-class looter, and decided that a life of leisure was preferable to campaigning against a rabble of Spanish guerillas who did not have the common decency to fight in open order and surrender like a "civilized" enemy. The manual describes Napoleon's stepson Eugene as the King of Rome. Actually, Napoleon's son (L'Aiglon ["The Eaglet"]) by Marie Louise was crowned King of Rome.

Sadly, no bibliography is included. This reviewer would recommend David Chandler's *Campaigns of Napoleon* as the basic and comprehensive text on the subject.

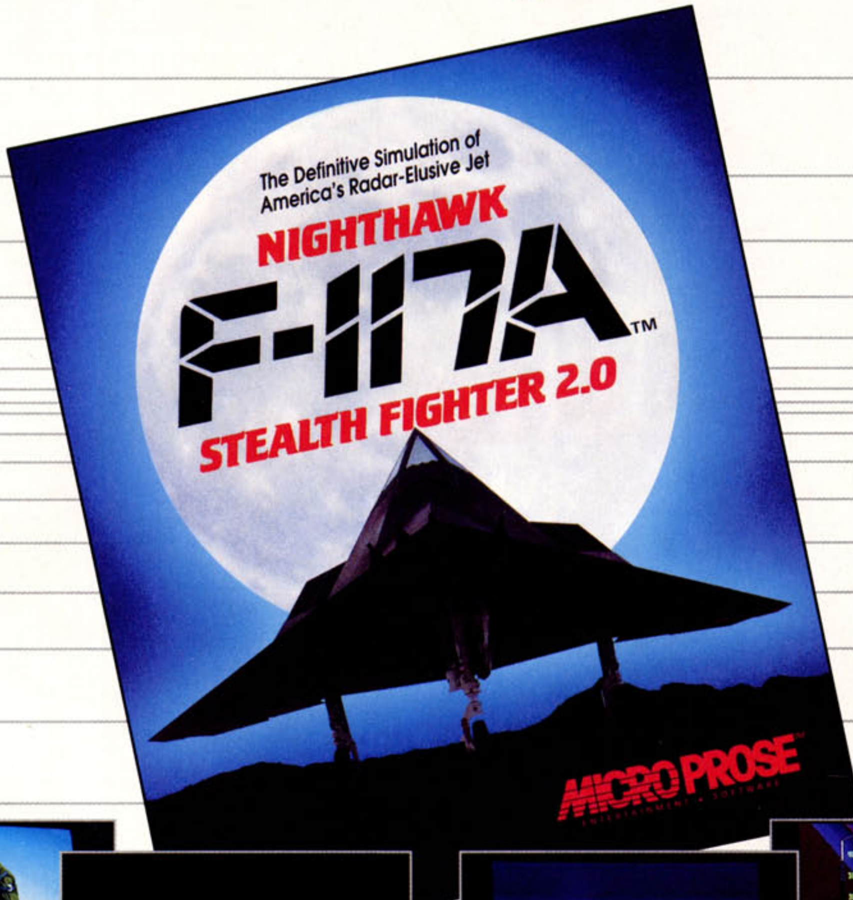
Gilded and Covered with Velvet (Graphics/Sound)

Graphics include both macro-level maps of the European continent and specific portions thereof (delineated by a point-to-point city system), as well as a detailed micro-level of hex warfare. The hex warfare is used for resolution of battles and the terrain is well rendered and detailed.

The graphics are more than sufficient for game purposes, and

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#91 - WIZARDRY VII; Predator II; Shining in the Darkness; Animation Studio Packages; The Black Crypt; The Treehouse; Conan the Cimmerian; The Games: Winter Challenge; Riders of Rohan; Shadow Sorcerer; Stellar Agent; Bart's House of Weirdness; Interview with The Perfect General designers; The Perfect General tips; Gunship 2000 tips; Megafortress scenario disk; and more!

are easily recognizable. Outbreaks of disease in cities are portrayed by a hospital bedside scene; labor unrest is depicted by the laborers at the barricades. These are welcome touches which add a different perspective.

Ad Lib sound support offers period music, but this quickly becomes repetitive, if not annoying. Music *can* be turned off. However, units moving to battle on the macro-level emit an internal and aggravating beep from the internal speaker which may *not* be turned off.



Victorious Troops Are the Best (Game Mechanics)

Game mechanics use keyboard or mouse (with the latter highly recommended). Commands are issued each month (at the officer level) and each season (at the government level). Each city will have an opportunity to act in every month, but as Napoleon, player inputs are limited to the player's particular level of command within the scenario. As a mere general, the player cannot expect to have a major role in the strategic decision-making that takes place on the national level. More importantly, until Napoleon achieves some success, his options are limited. This can mean that an early advance against the Austrians in Italy will often fail due to an imbalance in numbers. In fact, one will be hard pressed to emulate Napoleon's achievements.

Commands and inputs are very user-friendly as "pointing and clicking" will accomplish almost anything. When one has to choose a quantitative number, a choice may be made between "maximum available" or any number allowed (by either bar point or calculator click).

Officer commands include training troops, logistical collections and distributions, requests to higher authorities for assistance, movement, investment in the infrastructure, taxation and observation of other areas. Government commands expand to include international trade and diplomacy. Each and every officer (and there are 254 of them!) includes rating in politics, finance, logistics, construction, leadership, loyalty and experience — and not only military officers are included. Both diplomats and civilian figures are available (e.g. Joseph Fouche, the "Himmler" of the Empire and head of Internal State Security, is available). City aspects include economic wealth, foodstuffs, materiel, industry, commerce and agriculture.

Impossible Is Not a French Word (Game Play)

L'Empereur is a game with a long learning curve. If one starts in the earliest scenario, there is relatively little to do until Napoleon can amass some small successes. The later scenarios

do not have this problem, since Napoleon's previous successes allow much more latitude.

The initial scenario does not really reflect the chaos and anarchy that characterized post-Revolutionary France. While victory is always dependent on seizing cities, this does not reflect the early Napoleonic goal of military success coupled with political connections.



Later scenarios seem more historic, although it is difficult to determine the proper mix of commands and their impact upon each other and the simulation. When armies invade a city, the scale drops to a hex-war, traditional among board gamers and **Koei** aficionados. Combat elements include infantry, cavalry and artillery. While artillery can be used for indirect fire (but often with the range and accuracy of a Scud missile), the use of cavalry and infantry rarely seems to reflect the realities of Napoleonic warfare. At least, cavalry *does* have shock value and is more than simply fast-moving infantry. However, Napoleon was known for optimizing the "combined arms" of the nineteenth century. Tactical warfare in the simulation does not seem to reflect the proper application of mass and force against an enemy. Overall, the "flavor" of Napoleonic warfare is internally bland. Sometimes this reviewer felt that only the title and character names were evocative of the period.

While **Koei**'s prior releases covered periods of conflict unfamiliar to most American gamers, the simulation seemed "real" because of its uniqueness and novelty. When the same system is applied to a more familiar system of warfare, its uniqueness is lost. Thus, one knows it is Napoleonic because of the title; otherwise, it would have been just as "real" to guess that the conflict was occurring in 18th century China or Japan.

Our Hour Is Marked (Conclusions)

L'Empereur is the first computer simulation to attempt to cover the Napoleonic Campaigns in a military and political/economic simulation. As such, it may prove interesting to the truly dedicated player. However, even this grognard has his limits and *L'Empereur* has exceeded them.

As long as one is willing to accept that the game is not Napoleonic, it may, in fact, be enjoyable. Nevertheless, the grognard seeking a computer version of the classic boardgame *Empires in Arms* or computerized approximation of a well-run miniatures campaign may well be disappointed. Those who will be satisfied with a typical **Koei** game with a thin French veneer may well be happy. **CGW**

Virtual Falsehoods



State of the Industry: Virtuality is the essential or *true* nature of something. As an adjective, "virtual" has come to mean "almost true" or "true enough." In modern conversation, to say that something is "virtually" identical is to say that it *isn't* identical, but no one will be able to tell the difference. "Hey," says the salesperson, "don't worry about our being out of stock on Model E because, frankly, Model D is *virtually* identical. Most people don't even want those extra features that the Model E has and you'll save money, too!"

The computer game industry seems to be *virtually* committing fraud toward computer gamers about *virtual reality*. Since there seems to be a genuine excitement about three-dimensional gaming environments with physical inputs that register body movement and change perspective as the player tilts his or her head, marketing departments at many software publishers are describing the three-dimensional technology of their traditional computer games as being *virtual reality*.

In the February issue of *CGW*, we took issue with one company for touting a traditional computer game as being *virtual reality*. Nonetheless, two *advertisements* in the same issue called their traditional games — *virtual* — realities. Another game arrived in the mail after we went to press. It was a collection of parlor games which was marketed as a *virtual* vacation.

At *CGW*, we are disappointed in this trend because we perceive that marketing departments are turning a useful term into one that will be *virtually* meaningless by the time an authentic virtual reality hardware reaches the market. It is hard enough to try to describe the difference between a total immersion experience and a traditional computer game without the waters being muddied at this point in time. *Virtual reality* and any use of the adjective *virtual* should be restricted to those experiences which use additional hardware to enhance the gamer's perception of the alternate world being simulated. No "flat screen" representations of these alternate worlds, no matter how excellent their 3-D technology and collision detection may be, should be marketed as *virtual reality*. It just isn't honest.

State of the Magazine: Speaking of *virtual* falsehoods, *CGW* was recently victimized by a marketing misjudgment which occurred overseas. Shortly after signing an agreement to allow **Asia Recording** to publish a Chinese version of *CGW* in Taiwan and Hong Kong, we discovered that the company was also publishing *CGW* games, complete with *our* logo. Now, *Computer Gaming World* **does not** publish games, wholesale games, retail games, trade ad space for games to sell or fill mail orders for games. Indeed, staff members of *CGW* and executives of **Golden Empire Publications** are not even allowed to own stock in publicly-held corporations that publish computer games.

So, we were rather frustrated when we discovered that the Chinese company had taken the liberty of publishing *CGW* games as part of their license to publish a Chinese edition of the magazine. We immediately called **Asia Recording** and asked why they were doing something in our name that we would not think of doing ourselves. Asia Recording stated that they did not realize that anything was wrong with putting our magazine's title on another company's computer game. They stated that they did so in order "to spread the fame of *Computer Gaming World*." We have instructed **Asia Recording** to cease and desist from the publication of games under the *CGW* logo and we have been told that this has occurred.

Although we are delighted with the beautiful and professional job that Asia Recording has been doing in publishing a Chinese edition of our magazine, we are horrified by this incident and the potential blight it could bring upon our established reputation as an *independent* critical review magazine. For the record, neither **Golden Empire Publications** as a corporation, its executives nor its employees has/have authorized or accepted remuneration from the publication of computer games under the logo *CGW* or the title *Computer Gaming World*. **CGW**

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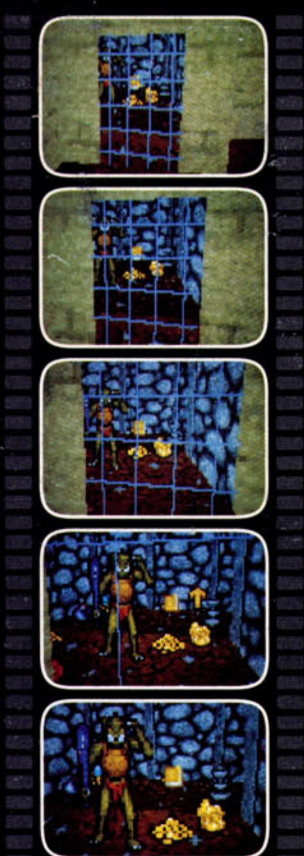
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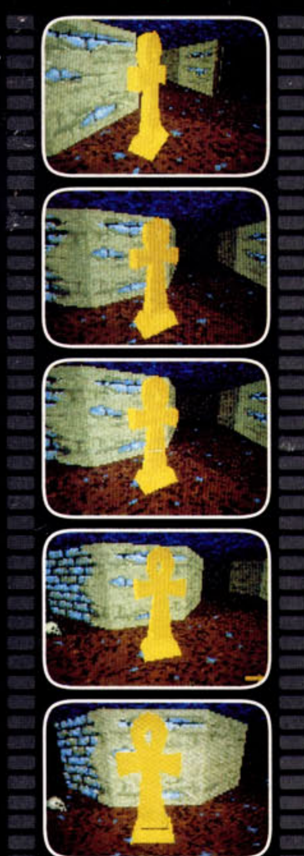
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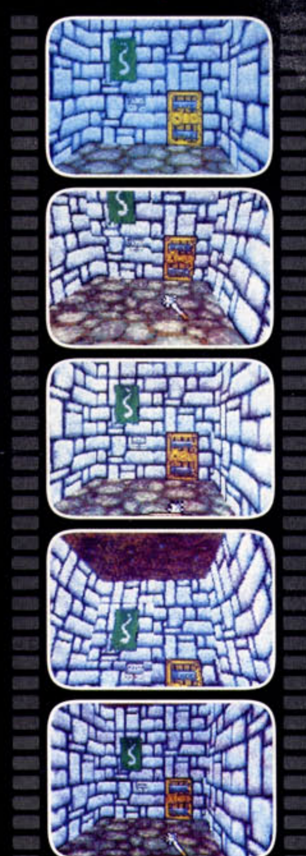
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